Norm Acceptance in the International Community
A study of disaster risk reduction and climate-induced migration

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Abstract
Different kinds of normative claims and statements of “oughtness” infuse the international political environment. But why do some proposed norms become accepted by the international community while others do not? This thesis investigates this central question using two normatively charged international issues as vehicles for explanation.

One issue reflects the norm to reduce disaster risk. The other issue concerns the normative question of asylum rights for climate-induced migrants. While climate-induced migration attracted much attention in the years 2007-2008, the norm acceptance process was stymied and stalled before it had a chance to gain broad acceptance in the international community. Disaster Risk Reduction reached a different outcome. After norm entrepreneurs had a difficult time in gaining traction for the issue, the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami had an immense impact on the norm’s development, which led to the international community agreeing to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015. The norm proposition to reduce disaster risk has thus reached a broad and high level of acceptance. This thesis uses a norm theoretical lens to understand these contrasting outcomes. In doing so, it shows that there are key components missing from conventional explanations of norm success and failure. Most importantly, the lack of attention to contingencies and to windows of opportunity that contingencies may open up.

An analytical framework is developed to account for contingent factors in norm evolution, and the relevance of these components is evaluated by using the two cases in question as plausibility probes. The framework takes the key variables from traditional approaches (agency, the norm itself and framing), adds two more recent suggestions (venue and resistance) and, most importantly, adds the component of contingencies (including windows of opportunity). The detailed empirical investigations draw on a rich, and in some parts unique, material of official texts, practitioner interviews and secondary literature. This thesis thus contributes to existing research on norms and provides future researchers with an enhanced tool for explaining norm emergence.

The case study on disaster risk reduction provided an example of how a natural catastrophe which coincided with an already planned and prepared international summit on the subject interacted to propel disaster risk reduction to the top of the political agenda and toward norm acceptance. The case concerning international protection for climate-induced migrants showed how three particular moments in time had promising potential to advance the norm toward greater acceptance but largely failed because there were no solutions to act on, because no viable window opened to drive further attention and acceptance or because there was a “negative window”. The analysis conducted according to the framework shows how events must be actively connected to a specific norm proposition and how they must be aligned with other factors that determine the success of a norm, defined in this study as norm acceptance.

Against this background, this study argues that contingencies, and a theorization of windows of opportunity, should always be included in explanatory tools on norm acceptance. Important explanatory aspects might otherwise be missed.

Keywords: International Relations, norms, norm diffusion, norm acceptance, norm emergence, norm life cycle, disaster risk reduction, climate-induced migration, climate refugees, climate security.

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Till Morfar och Mormor
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Acronyms and abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>Conference of the Parties</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRR</td>
<td>Disaster Risk Reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>ExCom</td>
<td>Executive Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAR</td>
<td>Global Assessment Reports</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross domestic product</td>
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<tr>
<td>HFA</td>
<td>Hyogo Framework for Action</td>
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<td>IASC</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Standing Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDMC</td>
<td>Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDNDR</td>
<td>International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFRC</td>
<td>International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPCC</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISDR</td>
<td>International Strategy for Disaster Reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRC</td>
<td>Norwegian Refugee Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHCHR</td>
<td>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2P</td>
<td>Responsibility to Protect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFDRR</td>
<td>Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDRO</td>
<td>United Nations Disaster Relief Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFCCC</td>
<td>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<td>UNISDR</td>
<td>United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNOCHA</td>
<td>United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
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<td>UNOPS</td>
<td>United Nations Office for Project Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNU-EHS</td>
<td>United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security</td>
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1. Introduction

Different kinds of normative claims and statements of “oughtness” infuse the international political environment. The international community is obliged to act to protect children’s rights, prevent wars, ensure sustainable development, ensure free and fair elections, ban antipersonnel landmines and protect fish stocks in the oceans. These and other claims concern “proper behavior” and how society should work to promote and abide by such norms in different ways. When norms are widely accepted, they guide behavior and shape how societies function – but why do some proposed norms become accepted by the international community while others are not? This thesis investigates this central question using two normatively charged international issues as vehicles for explanation.

One issue reflects the norm on the importance of preventing disasters from striking vulnerable communities, and the demand for the amelioration of negative effects through systematic risk and vulnerability reduction. The idea, and the underlying norm proposition associated with disaster risk reduction, emerged in the 1980s and was taken up fairly quickly by the international community. In the UN system, for instance, the 1990s was appointed the “International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction”; a formal agreement, the “Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World” of 1994 followed soon after; and the establishment of the United Nations office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) in 1999, a UN secretariat devoted to the international strategy of disaster risk reduction, institutionalized cooperation on the issue. By the end of 2015, most countries in the international community had come to accept the normative premise of disaster risk reduction and managed to commit to the norm in three different international agreements: the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World, the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). The norm on reducing disaster risk was further solidified in 2015 in the preamble of the Paris Agreement on climate change and was included in the Sustainable Development Goals. Largely through collaboration at the international level, the norm proposition had become widely accepted.

The other issue concerns the normative question of asylum rights for climate-induced migrants. The notion that environmental change might lead to cross-border population displacement in ever increasing numbers as a result of global warming – and that there is a gap in international protection for these groups of migrants – was identified in the 1980s (El-Hinnawi 1985; Jacobson
Interest in this issue increased in the 1990s and early 2000s as a growing number of advocates voiced concerns about the need for new protection mechanisms for cross-border climate-induced migrants. However, in contrast to the norm proposition on disaster risk reduction, protection for climate-induced migration later stalled. It is barely mentioned in any international agreement and continues to be contested by the international community. Despite initially strong advocacy and a persuasive humanitarian framing of the issue as “the human face of climate change”, (Gemenne 2011a; Warner 2011) its proponents are struggling to find a way forward on the international agenda. The issue has moved slowly out of academic discussions. It briefly became a popular buzz word in the international community in 2007–2008, but that short-lived success only briefly obscured a number of persistent challenges to norm adoption. In the years that followed, the proposition to ensure protection rights for climate-induced migrants hit a curious number of “invisible” obstacles. While rarely outspokenly opposed, the response from the international community time and again has been to delay action, to “investigate more” and to refrain from taking a meaningful stance on the issue of protecting climate migrants. In 2015, advocates made a strong push to “reopen closed doors” and force the issue’s adoption in the Paris Agreement. But it was virtually ignored, however, and mentioned only in a vague reference promising more study of an issue that has been studied for three decades (UNFCCC 2015b).

A norm here is understood as a widely accepted standard of “oughtness” – what should be done – and its associated behavior. Norms infuse all levels of political and social life but they have different degrees of importance and different implications. The two norm propositions examined here are not only both climate change-related questions, but also both touch upon fundamental aspects of life and death, require considerable collective action by the international community to be managed effectively and involve basic human rights. In addition, they are complex issues infused with a number of uncertainties and span multiple sectors and issue areas. Both are also linked to broader debates about security, development, resilience, adaptation and humanitarian aid. Nonetheless, three decades after their initiation, the two proposed norms have met with totally different fates. This thesis aims to reveal why and to examine these contrasting outcomes with the help of a synthetic framework for analyzing norm emergence.

International Relations (IR) as a research field is concerned with how and why states and other actors such as organizations, civil society and private sector companies engage with different transnational issues, such as conflict, peace, trade, the environment or migration, and how they sometimes cooperate around them. Moreover, IR investigates how international actors relate to each other and how national and domestic concerns interplay at the international level. A traditional key interest for IR is to understand how the world
works given that states are primarily sovereign and operate in a presumed “anarchy” (see for example Barnett and Sikkink 2008; Reus-Smit and Snidal 2008). Broadly speaking, there are two main approaches in the discipline of IR that might explain norm progress and acceptance in international politics. An ideational focus would pay attention mainly to the nature of the norm (see for example Finnemore 1996; Katzenstein 1996a; Klotz 1995a) and assume that it is the power of the idea underlying the norm that matters the most. A purely rationalist or realist approach (see for example Mearsheimer 1994/95), however, would assume that material interests and rational calculation dominate other considerations. From this perspective, norms serve only as window dressing over the naked pursuit of interests.

In both the above cases, however, developments do not appear to have followed either a purely ideational or a purely rationalist approach. Nor have they strictly followed a logic of appropriateness (as in a traditional constructivist approach), or a pure logic of consequences (as in a traditional rationalist approach), partly because such logics play out at different times during the process of norm evolution, under certain conditions or in combination with other factors. More specific norm-oriented frameworks do not necessarily help matters either. Approaches that narrow analysis to the “norm life cycle” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998) do not necessarily capture the wider array of motivations, logics and strategies that can shape the success or failure of a norm. Focused mainly on illustrating how to measure a norm’s successful journey over its “life cycle”, these approaches, as is shown in the theory section of this study, ignore a critical element of the explanation: the role of contingencies in affecting a norms evolutionary success. Instead, they mainly outline a series of steps that must be reached before a norm is internalized in the international system, and cannot capture the array of obstacles - and opportunities - that affect norm evolution.

This thesis shows that there are key components missing from conventional explanations of norm success and failure. An especially important component highlighted here is contingencies and the windows of opportunity that contingencies may open up. Existing approaches only briefly note the existence of such more or less unpredictable events and largely fail to consider them theoretically and empirically. This thesis develops a more nuanced analytical framework that can account for contingent factors in norm evolution, and evaluates the relevance of these components through using the two cases in question as plausibility probes. The detailed empirical investigations draw on official texts, practitioner interviews and the secondary literature to probe the potential explanatory value of the framework and increase our knowledge of the mechanisms through which ideas and value-laden claims become accepted by the international community.

By exploring how a number of key factors, and especially the dynamics surrounding contingencies, shape norm emergence and norm acceptance, the study that follows contributes to theory development on norm dynamics. The
study thus contributes not only to the scholarly literature on norms, but also to our broader understanding of how modern global governance works. Global governance itself has become more complex, as a multitude of actors interact and mutual interdependencies shape how issues make it to the international policy level and whether pressing problems are addressed. A number of trans-boundary challenges have emerged in recent decades – not least concerning climate change – that pose new challenges to international cooperation. Using two contemporary norm propositions as case studies, this thesis sheds light on norm acceptance in an increasingly interdependent world, in the hope that readers will gain a richer understanding of the complexities, opportunities and difficulties of norm diffusion in the international system today.

Against this backdrop, the remainder of this introductory chapter outlines and lays the foundation for the study. First, the chapter sets out the aims and contributions of this thesis. Norms are briefly conceptualized (before a more in-depth discussion on norms and norm acceptance in chapter 2) followed by a discussion on the need to enhance explanations of how norms emerge and become accepted. Moreover, this chapter provides an overview of the existing norm-oriented studies related to the two empirical cases chosen here and thus to the empirical field to which this thesis also aims to make a contribution. Finally, a brief overview of the research design and an outline of the thesis as a whole are provided.

1.1. Aims, research questions and contributions

The general aim of the thesis is to further develop theory on norm evolution in general and norm acceptance in particular. This thesis identifies a number of theoretical gaps, but the most important that this thesis attempts to narrow are the lack of adequate explanatory (rather than descriptive) tools for understanding norm acceptance and the previously neglected theorizing of contingencies in relation to norm evolution. Norms are complex objects to study, and there is still much to learn regarding the possible paths a norm proposition must take from formulation to acceptance. This thesis aims to take this field of research forward by suggesting enhancements to existing theoretical frameworks on norms and by adding additional explanatory components. In so doing, the thesis explores and examines two cases of norm evolution in the international community, using them to probe the plausibility of the new framework and to help refine existing theory.

More specifically, the theoretical contribution lies in its suggestions on the refinement and enhancement of the “standard” approach (epitomized by the norm life cycle) to the study of norm evolution in the international community – specifically, by adding the components of contingencies and windows of opportunity. The central research question that guides the construction of the analytical framework and research on the empirical cases at hand is to what
extent can existing approaches adequately capture the range of interacting elements that shape norm evolution in the cases under examination. Moreover, how can we explain how ideas and claims about appropriate values and behavior in the international system become or do not become accepted? Four sub-questions further guide the theoretical part of this thesis. First, in what ways are existing models of and frameworks on norm evolution sufficient or insufficient in answering the empirical aim of this thesis? Second, what aspects, variables and/or mechanisms can be added to improve them? Third, how do contingencies and windows of opportunity matter in explaining the outcomes of these cases? Fourth, what suggestions for future theory testing and development are generated by the plausibility probes employed in this thesis?

The empirical contribution is to offer a norm-based approach to explaining these particular cases, which should be of interest to scholars and practitioners alike. The central empirical question that guides the analysis of the material is: how can the different levels of acceptance that the norm propositions of protecting climate-induced migrants and reducing disaster risk have met in the international community be understood? Previous studies of these cases have either not used a norm theoretical lens for explanation or have done so insufficiently for the level of analysis sought here (as is discussed below). In addition, this thesis has gathered and makes use of rich, and in some parts unique, empirical material that provides the norm- and policy-related research on disaster risk reduction and climate-induced migration with novel insights into developments.

Apart from adding another stepping stone which future scholars on norms can use to continue their inquiry about norms, this thesis also intends to generate more policy-relevant knowledge on norms. It does so, for instance, by considering and developing variables that are relevant for those interested in advancing certain norms. This study, therefore, might “provide leverage for practitioners to influence outcomes” (George and Bennett 2005:69).

1.2. On norm emergence and acceptance

The cases examined in this thesis are instances of international norm emergence and, in a wider sense, this thesis is interested in why and how states embrace common values at the global level. This is a key question within the field of IR – embodied in the specific question of why some norms succeed while others fail at the international level – that yields different kinds of answers. A purely constructivist perspective would highlight the fact that widely accepted norms are “good” and “appropriate”, and touch upon what today are uncontestable values such as human rights and protecting people from harm. There is a sense of “oughtness” connected to the norm that builds networks of
supporters and followers. However, the international stage is full of meaningful norms that have not been fully taken up or widely accepted; and both case studies included in this thesis seem to have similar, basic qualities of goodness or “oughtness”. Thus, contrary to what some constructivist norm scholar might suggest (Keck and Sikkink 1998), the nature of the norm proposition alone does not appear to be the core explanation of norm acceptance.

On the other hand, a realist or rationalist stance would make the “power of norms” incidental to material interests and sovereignty. In these cases, variations in outcomes would be explained initially by considering the cost-benefits of action. States have nothing to gain by granting climate-induced migrants a right to stay in their countries. (On the contrary, it could be argued that states would have to spend material resources and compromise with their national sovereignty to do so.) Investing in disaster risk reduction, however, could be regarded as a positive insurance policy of sorts. Such considerations play a role, but a closer look reveals that they make up only part of the explanation for different levels of norm acceptance. Rationalist logics leave questions unanswered. For instance, why has the international community witnessed the take-up of some norms regarding migrants’ rights – or, indeed, human rights at all? And why would states bother to negotiate and adopt an international agreement on disaster risk reduction when they could take similar measures at the national level, without the commitments to support, and provide means and development assistance to, other countries – as stated in the Sendai Framework? A deeper approach to understanding norm evolution – and specifically, their acceptance by the international community – is required to answer what explains the variations in outcome in the two cases of climate-induced migration and disaster risk reduction studied here.

1.2.1. Defining norms, norm propositions and norm acceptance

There are several definitions of norms and many ways to operationalize them in analyses. Krasner (1983:2) defines norms as “standards of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations” while most contributors to the edited volume The Culture of National Security agree that norms are “collective expectations for the proper behavior of actors with a given identity” (Katzenstein 1996b:5). Finnemore and Sikkink emphasize the connection between norms and feelings of obligation and “oughtness”. They define a norm as a “standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity” (1998:891). Focusing on the “appropriateness” aspect, Finnemore and Sikkink see norms as represented through expressions of what ought to/should be done, what is right and wrong and which values are desirable (see also Jepperson, Wendt, and

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1 The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction of 2015 is the third of three international agreements on disaster risk. Among other things, it sets seven global targets through which the international community should address such matters.
Katzenstein 1996). Norms can thus be described as standards of “oughtness” and/or standards of behavior. When we speak of norms, we speak, for instance, of whether and how drugs should be restricted, whether there should be equal rights to education or whether greenhouse gas emissions should be restricted.2

Ideas are the essence of norms but norms differ from ideas in that they aim to regulate behavior (Florini 1996). Some writers distinguish between norms as actual behavioral practices and prescriptive norms, or “prescriptive standards of behavior” (Evangelista 2014:5). While many scholars use different definitions of norms interchangeably, this thesis is primarily focused on norms as prescriptive standards of behavior. Implementation, compliance and practices, for the most part, fall outside the scope of this study.

It can reasonably be argued that a norm is not a norm until it is “taken for granted” and fully complied with. One should distinguish, therefore, between the concept of a norm and a suggested norm – that is, a norm that is in the process of emerging. A wide array of concepts for describing an un-adopted norm can be found in the literature. Finnemore & Sikkink (1998), for instance, talk about a “new norm” when they describe a norm in the emergence stage. Other denominations are “potential norm” (Gest et al. 2013), “emerging norm” (Knight 2011), “norm initiative” (Coleman 2011) and “norm candidate” (Björkdahl 2002a; Wunderlich 2013). For the purpose of this study, a strong, purposive concept is needed that entails both an element of suggestion and a value-claim. With that in mind, this thesis employs the notion of a norm proposition. The suggestions mentioned above are akin to the concept of a norm proposition, but they are not entirely adequate for the following reasons.

First, the simple concepts of a “new”, “potential” or “emerging” norm are too vague. The concept of a new norm is even misleading as the concept itself does not make clear whether it is new in the sense that it is a novel idea, whether the new norm is only at the beginning of the norm evolution process or whether it is newly internalized – in terms of being adopted or established. The concepts of a potential or emerging norm do not capture the broader dynamics at play, such as proponents’ motivations. A norm just “is”. Nor do these concepts always encompass a proposed solution or action. One option is to resort to the concept of a “norm candidate”, which is “framed as the solution to a salient problem” (Wunderlich 2013:25). This would capture the intentionality sought in this thesis, but the concept of a norm candidate implies that the norm under study has already travelled a significant part of the journey towards acceptance, albeit that it has not yet passed that mark. In contrast, the concept of a norm proposition enables the study to capture the norm from its creation, but also implies external agency and treats norms as the object in the norm evolution process; that is, as molded and carried through by agency as

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2 This paragraph is drawn from a similar paragraph in Jakobsson (2018:53), a text produced within the scope of this PhD, and has been reused here with permission of the publisher.
well as other contextual factors. Against this background, and the need to balance structure and agency (see chapter 2), this thesis finds it useful and necessary to introduce the concept of a norm proposition which better suits the aims of this study.

Whereas a fully developed norm is an internalized standard of behavior, a norm proposition is a call to create a policy that would regulate behavior. For instance, the call to give women equal voting rights, was a norm proposition – not a norm – for quite a long time before it was accepted and made a part of human rights and a legal standard in most states. Another example is lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights, which is a norm in some countries but remains only a proposition – a claim for such rights – in other parts of the world. Some norms are generally complied with without having been formally proposed or regulated in a policy setting – or become established in such rules long after their practical adoption. At the same time, other norm propositions become formally settled in laws and rules, without having a particularly strong impact on either thinking or behavior.

This thesis studies norms through a specific, and arguably the most important, phase of their evolution, from norm proposition to becoming an accepted norm. The latter is the specific outcome under examination here, the dependent variable. Norm acceptance by the international community differs from other accounts in that it does not necessarily involve neither a broad scale internalization at the domestic levels or full compliance with the norm, as in the “end point” of Finnemore and Sikkink’s 1998 life cycle, but nor is it just a simple formal adoption of normative principles in international agreements. Norm acceptance involves the movement of a norm from an idea that is promoted among a smaller group of individuals or actors towards an outcome in which the norm is widely agreed on by the international community. Norm acceptance may come in the shape of international agreements (both binding and non-binding) but it also takes place in subtler ways of acceptance within a wide array of communities of for instance state and non-state actors. These communities support the normative premises of the proposition and accept its “oughtness”, “goodness” and desirability. Signs of acceptance include when

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3 A norm proposition (as well as a norm candidate or a new/potential/emerging norm) does not necessarily entail a novel and original idea. In fact, almost no norm propositions are entirely new, as many writers have noted. Norm propositions might be old ideas revived or existing ideas reframed or reformulated (Björkdahl 2002a:50; Kowert and Legro 1996:469).

4 Another concept which could be considered here is “institutionalization”, used by Finnemore & Sikkink (1998). Institutionalization is by them understood as the take-up of the new norm in international rules or law. Institutionalization can also be understood in terms of finding an institutional or organizational home for the new norm, or as the process “characterised by how a norm becomes mainstreamed into an organisation’s discourse, procedures, and structures” (Björkdahl 2013:326; see also Björkdahl 2002a). The latter definition of institutionalization is closer to the factor named venue employed in this thesis’ analytical framework. Conceptualizing the outcome of interest as “acceptance” is therefore important in order to distinguish between this study’s variables and its outcomes.
few states argue against the norm proposition in discussions in international policy forums, when states demonstrate a general willingness or intention to follow it and/or when support for the norm is considered largely self-evident. But norm acceptance, as it is understood here, does not go so far as necessarily require diffusion to the national level, or to measure actual behavior or compliance. (A longer discussion on norm acceptance follows in chapter 2). The empirical chapters of this thesis will illustrate more specifically how different outcomes may look in practice. Disaster risk reduction is an example of a case that has clearly received wide acceptance at the international level but still has some steps to take before becoming fully integrated into and implemented at the national level. The case of climate-induced migration has not met with the same level of acceptance despite some occasional progress and some support in principle.

In addition to the concepts described above, this thesis also frequently uses other concepts such as norm development, norm evolution and norm emergence. The first two concepts are used interchangeably, generally to refer to the process and stages through which norms grow, change and/or diffuse. Norm emergence is more specific to the early stages of norm evolution – from proposition to broader acceptance or disregard (see sections 2.4.2. for more on how norm evolution has been modeled and section 3.1. for more on the concept of norm acceptance).

The thesis is also interested in norm acceptance in the international community. The international community is here understood as actors, such as states, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, epistemic communities, private sector companies, and so on, operating at the international level to address a particular topic. The exact composition of this community differs from case to case, depending on which actors are interested in an issue and which actors are critical to its take-up and acceptance. Hedley Bull has offered a definition of a related concept, the “international society”, which is a group that is:

…conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions.

(Bull 2012:13)

In Bull’s understanding of this society, states are the only possible members. While the understanding of “international community” employed in this thesis is wider – and includes other types of actors – Bull’s definition gives some guidance on what the glue for such a community might be.
In sum, an international norm is a widely accepted standard of behavior held by a collective body – in this case, the international community. For a norm proposition to move from an isolated idea to a standard of behavior widely accepted in the international community, many obstacles must be overcome and factors considered. This thesis explores those obstacles and factors, positioning itself within the scholarly field of international norm dynamics research within International Relations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norm</td>
<td>A widely accepted standard of behavior held by a collective body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm proposition</td>
<td>A call to create a policy that would regulate behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm evolution</td>
<td>The process and stages through which norms grow, change and/or diffuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm acceptance</td>
<td>The point in norm evolution when the norm is no longer a proposition but a standard which in essence is considered desirable and which is no longer disputed by a majority of stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm emergence</td>
<td>The initial stages of norm evolution – from birth of norm to acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International community</td>
<td>Actors, such as states, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, epistemic communities and private sector companies, operating at the international level to address a particular topic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Summary of key concepts

1.2.2. The need for richer explanations of norm evolution

The norm-oriented research field approaches these questions in various ways, but a “standard approach” seems to dominate, represented, for instance, by Finnemore and Sikkink’s norm life cycle (1998) and its adherents. This approach offers a view of norm evolution as an often linear process in which new norms emerge, and are established and accepted (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Gest et al. 2013; Knight 2011; Müller and Wunderlich 2013). The main mechanisms through which this is expected to occur are: norm entrepreneurship (Björkdahl 2008; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998), persuasion (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998), contestation (Wiener 2008) and socialization (Checkel 2007). However, understanding norm evolution also requires an understanding of how norms, which are initially fuzzy and floating in terms of definitions

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5 As described above, this definition has been formulated in different ways with similar essential meanings. See for example Finnemore and Sikkink (1998:891); Katzenstein (1996a:5); Klotz (1995a:14) and Krasner (1983:2).
and boundaries, become institutionalized, negotiated, accepted and internalized.

Moreover, it is surprising how little the norm life cycle, and other norm models, consider other factors that influence whether norms are successfully taken up or fail. It is argued here that standard approaches to explaining norm outcomes are insufficient. This study will use a modified approach, for several reasons.

First, the main focus and interest of this thesis is the early stages of traditional accounts of norm evolution; that is, on norm emergence and acceptance. While it can be argued that the simplicity of models such as the norm life cycle is a strength and increases their applicability across different types of norms and sectors, this also makes them less helpful for detailed, explanatory purposes. This thesis goes beyond merely identifying the different points in the progression of a norm to instead offer explanations for why and when new norms are allowed to progress at all. Therefore, this study makes an effort to specify and operationalize the emergence stage of the norm life cycle.

Second, academic debates on norm dynamics have put much effort into debating whether agency or structure has the most bearing on explaining norm diffusion, how deliberation and contestation are necessary elements of norm evolution, and whether norms unfold in a sequential process with a beginning and an end or in a never-ending circular process of feedback loops. While many norm scholars accept that agency and structure are co-constitutive in norm evolution, few actually demonstrate this empirically. Surprisingly little effort, even among structure-oriented scholars, has been put into understanding the influence of the broader political, institutional and societal dynamics, such as political agendas, bureaucracies, or public opinion, that surround norm emergence.

Third, and most importantly, while some norm literature acknowledges that there is an element of timing, chance, opportunity and external shock to norm formation (see for example Björk Dahl 2002a; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Jose 2017; Müller and Wunderlich 2013), few have theorized or systematized what this means as part of a more generic framework for study. Here, we might take inspiration from the public policy literature on the notion of contingencies, focusing events and windows of opportunity (Baumgartner and Jones 2002; Birkland 1997; Collier and Collier 1991; Kingdon 1984, 1995, 2011; Sabatier 1998; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1997) as an important but underappreciated explanatory factor. International political life is highly complex and no case of norm adoption can be understood only through the advocacy of norm entrepreneurs or the socialization processes between early or late adopters. Nor can norm acceptance be understood only by focusing on the material interests of powerful states. Sometimes, norms that are seemingly good and right in relation to other fundamental values of humanity and social life still have a difficult time achieving formal acceptance at the international level while other norms that entail potentially contentious elements find a way
to proceed. Drawing on the concept of windows of opportunity, this thesis brings contingency into a more systematic explanation of norm success and failure. In doing so, the expectation is that it will reveal some of the seemingly “invisible” explanatory factors that other approaches neglect.

In short, this study remedies the deficits of the “standard approach” to explaining norm evolution, and contributes to the academic debate on norm dynamics and the understanding of how norms are accepted in international policy. It does so by elaborating on key elements that should be taken into account when studying norm diffusion, and which have largely been neglected in previous approaches. Most importantly, the dissertation argues that a stronger emphasis is needed on the contextual and political conditions with which ideas interact in order to become accepted norms in the international community. It theorizes the importance of contingent factors, such as disruptive events that open political windows of opportunity, and uses the cases as plausibility probes to evaluate the importance of these factors. This allows for a richer, more comprehensive and more useful analysis and explanation of the different levels of norm acceptance that these cases demonstrate. For scholars of norm dynamics, this refined framework and the result of the plausibility probes provide enhanced explanatory leverage for understanding the contextual mechanisms that influence norm formation.

1.3. Norm-oriented studies on disaster risk reduction and climate-induced migration

As mentioned above, this thesis aims to make an empirical as well as a theoretical contribution. The objective of the detailed case analysis is to provide new insights to the policy- and norm-oriented literature on disaster risk reduction and climate-induced migration. The academic literature on these topics per se has thus far been principally concerned with the empirical aspects of the phenomena. Less common, but growing, academic interest has produced knowledge regarding the political debate and normative developments. This section outlines the most recent academic research findings related to norm developments on the two empirical cases and provides the background to which the empirical part of this thesis adds new knowledge.

A key publication on policy developments and structures regarding international disaster politics is *Disaster Without Borders* (Hannigan 2012). The author examines different phases of developments, the debates and the different types of actors involved, and maps out the global policy field of disasters. Hannigan uses emergent institutionalism – which he argues can be found at the intersect of four different discursive realms: hazard, risk, and safety; international development; humanitarian aid; and environmentalism and climate change – to understand the field and predict future developments. Hannigan
briefly touches on normative socialization theory and acknowledges that this approach has some useful insights, especially regarding the dynamics of change. According to Hannigan, however, it does not offer an adequate explanation of disaster-related international policy developments.

Two researchers who have taken a specific interest in norms and disaster management are Hollis (2015) and Rum (2016). Hollis (2015) looks at how disaster risk management diffuses to the local level through regional organizations and through relational and cultural links. Rum (2016) also employs a constructivist approach to norm take-up at the regional level, using disaster management in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as an example and Finnemore & Sikkink’s norm life cycle as an analytical tool. Rum finds that norm take-up at the regional level has been facilitated by factors such as assistance from the international community and determined leadership by ASEAN. Rum focuses on acceptance at the regional – rather than the global – level and does not make use of any explanatory variables outside of the norm life cycle.

Norm-focused approaches to understanding disaster risk reduction have thus far been mainly targeted at diffusion to the regional level – rather than norm acceptance and adoption at the international level. In addition, few studies have attempted to take a comprehensive approach derived from theories of norm dynamics and the theoretical use of contingencies or windows of opportunity is totally absent.

Shifting focus to policy relevant studies on climate-induced migration, we can see that there is a focus on the applicability of existing or suggested legal frameworks or on the discursive use of concepts surrounding climate-induced migration. McAdam (2011; 2012a; 2014) has produced overviews of the attempts to provide new norms (in legal terms) on climate-induced migration and has discussed both the extent to which current legal instruments are – or are not – applicable and what would be desirable in a new legal solution. (Other discussions on the applicability of existing instruments or the suggestions for new ones have been made by, for instance, Biermann and Boas 2010; Cournil 2011; and Docherty and Giannini 2009.) In a doctoral thesis, Gemenne (2009) used the Advocacy Coalition Framework to understand the interaction between norms and policies on environmental migration, on the one hand, and debates and conceptualizations of the issue, on the other. Castles (2002, 2011), a well-known scholar on migration studies, has attempted to disentangle the political and academic debate, and traces the different divides that still polarize the discussion.

A small group of scholars has used constructivist norm-focused approaches to illustrate and understand the policy developments on climate-induced migration. Mayer (2014) examined norm entrepreneurship and found four different normative “enterprises” (by which he means sets of entrepreneurs) around the issue of environmental migration, one of which was the enterprise that specifically promotes protection for environmental migrants. Mayer also
studied the narratives by which actors justify their stance on protecting environmentally induced migrants and found that these narratives mainly follow a logic of rights, responsibility or security. He finds that none of these has been particularly successful and argues that state interests play a greater role than ethical considerations (Mayer 2016). A similar approach was taken by Methmann and Oels (2015). The authors track the genealogy of climate-induced displacement through a discourse analysis and find how discursive developments have moved from a threat-focused towards an emphasis on resilience. Particular analyses of the organizational mandates and structures surrounding climate-induced migration can be found in Rosenow-Williams and Gemenne (2015), Simonelli (2016) and Hall (2013, 2015, 2016).

Thus far, however, few if any scholars have used theories on norm dynamics or theories on windows of opportunity to understand the underpinnings of the political process on climate-induced migration. In this thesis, a novel approach is applied that provides new insights into these important cases of norm emergence, and thus illuminates and emphasizes new aspects. In Jakobsson (2018), the author of this thesis suggests a tripartite analytical framework of nine factors as a first attempt to provide a systematic tool for analyzing the progress of protection claims for climate-induced migrants. The framework presented there can be viewed as an initial attempt to build the more precise framework accomplished in this thesis.

1.4. Research design

This section provides a brief summary of the research design and the methods applied in this thesis. A more in-depth discussion and justification of the methodological considerations is presented in chapter 4.

The research design employed in this thesis was selected as the best approach for fulfilling the overall goals of the study. It demanded an initial, full understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing research on norm dynamics. Key insights and findings from previous research were extracted to provide the building blocks for a new synthetic analytical framework. In addition, other strands of literature which might improve analytical leverage and offer a more richly textured explanation of each case were also considered. This was especially necessary for aspects – such as contingencies – where the existing norm literature falls short. A substantive part of the methodological work of this thesis consisted of operationalizing the factors in the framework into measurable variables. These operationalizations can be found in chapter 3, which presents the theoretical framework. The framework created then needed to be evaluated and applied to actual empirical cases.

The case study design adhered to the “plausibility probe” strategy used to assess the utility of a newly designed or revised theoretical framework.
(Eckstein 1975). Theoretically suggested factors from the framework were assessed through in-depth qualitative analyses of cases, structured by the framework in question, in order to fully assess its plausibility. This approach leaves room to identify other missed or under-explored aspects that the framework has not accounted for.

Three types of material were used to investigate the cases: written material from the actors involved, such as policy documents, statements or reports; interviews, primarily with representatives of relevant organizations, civil servants and academics; and secondary material, such as other academic accounts of the course of events. This combination of the different types of material provided different perspectives on the accounts, which together built a detailed and nuanced understanding of the process.

1.5. Outline of the thesis

The study is structured as follows. Chapter 2 begins by discussing the traditional approaches used in the field of International Relations used to explain outcomes in international politics. It then engages in the “constructivist turn” of IR and discusses different constructivist approaches and their different epistemological and ontological standpoints. The chapter then focuses in on the realm of studies on norm dynamics and norm acceptance. It provides the background to the study of norms in IR, and assesses existing approaches and models in norm dynamics. The chapter finds that these approaches are insufficient to adequately explain norm acceptance, principally because they are overly simplistic and leave out a theorization of contingent and contextual conditions. The chapter further specifies the deficits in the literature that this thesis aims to remedy. Departing from the key findings of chapter 2, chapter 3 constructs a theoretical framework that further specifies key components of norm evolution and adds the critical aspect of contingencies. Chapter 4 offers a description of the methodological considerations and applied methods as part of the research design of this thesis.

The subsequent chapters contain the empirical case studies. The theoretical framework is probed using a successful case of norm acceptance, that of disaster risk reduction, in chapter 5, and an unsuccessful case of norm acceptance, that of international protection for climate-induced migration, in chapter 6. The concluding chapter elaborates on the key findings, establishes the plausibility of the theoretical framework and proposes directions for future research.
2. Explaining international outcomes

This thesis examines norms in the international system. In traditional International Relations (IR) scholarship, norms have not always been considered important for explaining international outcomes. Decades of research on international relations tended to prioritize material interests, power or formal institutions in explaining outcomes. But international political outcomes do not always unfold in the ways that might be expected using theories based on purely realist or liberal premises. Especially since the end of the Cold War, a whole strand of research has grown stronger, trying to disentangle the workings of the more subtle, abstract and values-based underpinnings of international political life – norms. Apart from studies specifically focused on the role of norms in shaping international outcomes, scholars in sociology, law, psychology and economics, as well as a large part of the public policy literature have turned their attention to how much policy issues and political regimes are underpinned by norms of various types (see for example Björkdahl 2002a; Cialdini, Kallgren, and Reno 1991; Gibbs 1968; Hasenclaver, Mayer, and Rittberger 1997; Krasner 1983; March and Olsen 1998; Posner 1997).

In the discipline of IR, scholars who study norms consider them to be the representation of what certain groups collectively perceive as the “right” and “wrong” way to think, act and address problems. The assumption is that some actors feel so strongly about certain values that they have a desire to spread them to other groups and that norms, as such, serve to shape both interests and policymaking outcomes. While norm scholars find norms crucial to most aspects of social and political life, since there is no “global government” that can enforce common decisions and agendas, they play a specifically interesting role in the study of international politics. Behavior is thus shaped by other factors – often norms – that influence how states act and cooperate to accomplish common goals – dynamics that are the central focus of the academic field of IR as a whole.

Broadly put, norm scholars argued initially that there were deeper explanations for behavior and outcomes in the international system than first met the eye – something that made “the world hang together” (Ruggie 1999). The so-called constructivist turn in International Relations expanded in the late 1980s and grew increasingly robust in the 1990s (Checkel 1998). It is considered a

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6 As this chapter shows, norms and interests can also be understood as mutually constitutive.
major part of IR’s theoretical “third debate”, which can be understood as having been spawned from decades of interpretative sociological scholarship. The “turn” had become popular by the end of the Cold War, and the resulting in a desire to understand the world in ways that were different from traditional analyses focused on purely rationalist precepts, intergovernmental bargaining and power politics (see for example Adler 2013).

This chapter sets out the theoretical literature in which this study is positioned. It begins with the traditional state-centered approaches to explaining international outcomes. It then outlines the rise of constructivism and the constructivist turn. The rise of constructivist scholarship in IR is closely intertwined with an increased recognition of – and focus on – norms as an important component in understanding international relations and politics. The chapter then narrows its focus to norms and norm-oriented approaches. It provides an overview of existing models and theories of norm evolution, and defines a “standard approach” – in which the norm life cycle (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998) and its followers take center-stage. After considering the most common critiques of these models, the chapter summarizes the key limitations of the standard approach for explaining the specific aspect of norm acceptance more generally, and the two cases examined in this thesis, in particular.

2.1. Traditional approaches

In the early days of IR scholarship, various versions of realism dominated the field, although liberal ideas and viewpoints were also present (Schmidt 2013). Most of these traditional approaches to explaining international outcomes relied on rationalist assumptions about what drives states and placed a central focus on material power and power politics (Snidal 2013).

Rationalist approaches to international outcomes, broadly speaking, assume that actors have a clear set of ranked preferences based on material interests and make cost-benefit calculations in the pursuit of those preferences (Choi 2015; O’Faircheallaigh 2013). The rationality of states is a core assumption in realism (Mearsheimer 2001). In its purest form, realists, underpinned by rational choice thinking, assume that actors have equal and adequate access to information about each choice and its consequences (Snidal 2013), or makes information about other’s motives a key ingredient in explaining state behavior (Glaser 2010). Rationalists understand rationality as “instrumental”, meaning that actors choose to act on the option that is expected to maximize their interests in relation to material resources, to power and/or to security

7 A popular narrative on the evolution of the academic field of International Relations is to describe it as three “debates”; where the first is between “idealists” and “realists”; the second between “traditionalists” and “behavioralists” and the third between rationalist and critical scholars. This is a stylized, and in some respects, not entirely accurate description of the development of the field (Schmidt 2013).
(Mearsheimer 2001; Waltz 1979). In specific relation to norms, such approaches usually mean that norms are secondary to other, more important factors such as interests. Rationalists would agree that “actors observe norms motivated by their utilitarian cost-benefit calculations when they perceive the benefits of compliance as outweighing the costs of norm adherence” (Wunderlich 2013:21, see also Axelrod 1986).

In general, a realist account of international politics pays little attention to factors or actors other than states. International institutions and organizations, and ideational factors such as norms are largely ignored (Hasenclaver, Mayer, and Rittberger 1997). Realism views political will as driven by states’ interests and relative power gains, and they largely ignore how these interests form in the first place (Price and Reus-Smit 1998). Liberal theories, while more open to non-state explanations and accepting of institutions and cooperation, are still mainly state-centered since even institutions are treated as means for states to pursue interests. A liberal would thus focus on states’ absolute rather than relative gains (as in the realist case), but still be more concerned with states as drivers of outcomes (Keohane and Martin 1995).

While norms did not play an essential role in early explanations of international political life, contemporary realists and liberals would not deny that norms exist or that they might even have some impact on international politics. However, for them, norms are a relatively minor part of what shapes interests and international political life. Rationalists view norms as secondary factors of relatively little importance (Krasner 1982; Mearsheimer 1994/95). In addition, for realists, norms and interests are static in nature and can be held fairly constant, whereas for constructivists (see below, and Choi 2015) norms are dynamic and constantly changing in relation to interests. In line with its rational choice foundations, rationalists consider that actors’ cost-benefit calculations, and thus their interests, determine which norms are taken up and why (Axelrod 1986; Wunderlich 2013). Thus, in terms of their viewpoint on norms and international outcomes, a realist, for instance, would deny that states would voluntarily give up sovereignty to comply with international norms while a liberal institutionalist would focus on the presence of norms as rule-shaping behavior, and how international organizations functions as vehicles for or hindrances to norm diffusion.

2.2 The constructivist turn and constructivist foundations

Partly because the traditionalist approaches underplayed the importance of norms in international outcomes, a “constructivist turn” in the discipline brought new attention to and appreciation of the role of norms. Constructivism is interested in how ideational and non-material aspects of social life can shape actions and choices in international politics (or function as interests in themselves). Concepts such as norms, ideas, identity and socialization are central
to constructivist research. The constructivist turn and thus the rise of a new approach to IR was emphasized by Robert Keohane in his presidential address at the annual conference of the International Studies Association in 1988 (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001), thus solidifying this new strand of IR research.

The foundations of the constructivist turn are often described as having been laid by Nicholas Onuf (see for example Onuf 1989) and Alexander Wendt (see for example Wendt 1992). For instance, the concept of “constructivism” was coined by Onuf in his work on rules and rule in social theory and international relations (1989). These works showed how a substantial part of international affairs was subjectively and socially constructed, including key concepts such as “anarchy” (Wendt 1992) and “interests” (Onuf 1989), thereby relaxing core rationalist assumptions.

Roughly a decade after constructivism as a research orientation entered the field of IR, Checkel (1998) and Finnemore and Sikkink (2001) assessed what constructivist research had achieved in the intervening years. Roughly a decade after that, Adler (2013) undertook the same task. These reviews summarize constructivism in the following useful ways:

Constructivism is concerned/…/with underlying conceptions of how the social and political world works. It is not a theory but an approach to social inquiry based on two assumptions: (1) the environment in which agents/states take action is social as well as material; and (2) this setting can provide agents/states with understandings of their interests (it can “constitute” them).

(Checkel 1998:325f)

Constructivism is an approach to social analysis that deals with the role of human consciousness in social life. It asserts that human interaction is shaped primarily by ideational factors, not simply material ones; that the most important ideational factors are widely shared or “intersubjective” beliefs, which are not reducible to individuals; and that these shared beliefs construct the interests of purposive actors.

(Finnemore and Sikkink 2001:391)

Unlike positivism and materialism, which take the world as it is, constructivism sees the world as a project under construction, as becoming rather than being. Unlike idealism, post-structuralism, and postmodernism, which take the world only as it can be imagined or talked about, constructivism accepts that not all statements have the same epistemic value and consequently there is some foundation for knowledge.

(Adler 2013:113)

While all constructivists acknowledge the influence of social life on politics and view politics as something becoming and in construction rather than fixed, not all constructivists share the same ontological and epistemological standpoints. The “strong” (also called “postmodern” and “critical” by Finnemore and Sikkink 2001 and Price and Reus-Smit 1998 or “thick” constructivism by
Hay 2002) branch of constructivism relies on subjective hermeneutics (Adler 2013) while the “weak” (also called “modern” by Finnemore and Sikkink 2001 and Price and Reus-Smit 1998 or “thin” constructivism by Hay 2002) branch leans more towards objective hermeneutics (Adler 2013). Thin constructivists acknowledge the notion that the process of understanding aspects of the world cannot be separated from the interpreter’s interpretation, but that this not the same as saying that there is no “objective reality” or that no claims can be held to be truer than others. Thus, a thin constructivist in practice can be interested in producing systematic knowledge, finding causalities and assessing the most plausible explanations, and as such may use similar methodologies as rationalist scholars – but with a broader understanding of different kinds of explanatory factors (Adler 2013; Finnemore and Sikkink 2001). Thin constructivists have often been criticized by their “thicker” colleagues, who have even argued that thin constructivists are not real constructivists (George 1994). A thick constructivist is not interested in causalities or isolating explanatory variables. Nor do they believe that some knowledge claims can be held to be more valid than others (Adler 2013; Finnemore and Sikkink 2001). Finnemore and Sikkink (2001) write about the postmodernist (or “thick”) research programs where, they argue, this stance “makes it possible to deconstruct and critique the knowledge claims of others but makes it difficult to construct and evaluate new knowledge claims” (p. 395).

Adler’s (2013) overview of constructivism identifies no less than eight different types of constructivism which can be placed on a spectrum between the strong (thick) and the weak (thin). He places critical theory, radical constructivism and critical constructivism on the most subjective and strong side. Close to these types is the modernist linguistic approach. In the weak branch, Adler places neo-Kantianism, modernism and pragmatic realism. “Pragmatism” is placed in the middle of the spectrum.

This thesis should be understood as founded within the weak or thin branch of constructivism, close to the modernist and pragmatic realist field. Adler (2013) places some of his own work in the modernist strand of constructivism together with writers such as Checkel, Finnemore, Risse-Kappen and Katzenstein. According to him, these modernist scholars seek to explain international relations by uncovering underlying causal social mechanisms and constitutive social relations, and rely on objective hermeneutics to do so. This study follows a similar orientation, in seeking to devise a framework to help explain norm emergence and to encourage subsequent application of that framework to other cases, by other scholars, with the hope of establishing general patterns.

Pragmatic realism, the other constructivist strand with which this study aligns, acknowledges assumptions from both branches of constructivism (Adler 2013). It distinguishes between a natural world, which is a material reality and exist as it “is”, and a social, intersubjective, world. The natural
world exists irrespective of human interpretation but research, and its interpretations, can never be separated from the researcher’s point of view and “the attachment of collective meaning to a previously existing material reality” (Adler 2013:117). To the pragmatic realist, the natural world and the social world are separate, but it is the understanding of the social world that makes the natural world meaningful. The social world is understood through its “reasons for action, individuals’ reasoning processes, and collective understandings within dialogical communities” (Adler 2013:117), aspects that are of interest also to a scholar within the realist school. (A longer discussion on the epistemological and ontological positions of this thesis can be found in chapter 4.)

2.3. The relationship between rationalism and constructivism

Looking more broadly again, constructivist approaches have some foundational attributes that serve to distinguish them from the more traditionalist, rational or liberal approaches described above. To begin with, constructivists have a different focus and emphasis than most realists and liberals, but that does not mean that they deny that actors are rational and that their choices and actions are based on rationality (Adler 2013). Rather, constructivists are interested in the social and ideational factors that shape interests and thus shape the way in which actors perceive their options and the desirability of those options.

Both rationalists and constructivists thus acknowledge the existence of rationality as well as norms in international political life. However, as the discussion in this chapter strives to illuminate, key differences lie in the following points: (a) the different logics of action that constructivists and rationalists apply to politics in order to understand it; (b) that constructivists and rationalists generally have a different idea of what actors consider as rational and on what that rationality is based; and (c) which – out of norms and interests – constitute the other.

Where a constructivist assumes that a logic of appropriateness drives human behavior, a rationalist assumes a logic of consequence (Krasner 1999; March and Olsen 1998). The logic of appropriateness implies that actors rely on norms to identify what constitutes appropriate behavior in a certain situation according to a common understanding of appropriate behavior and the actor’s own identity in relation to this (Kratochwil 1989; March and Olsen 1998). Norms are thus the driving force and constitutive factor for actors’ behavior, identity and interests (March and Olsen 2011; Wunderlich 2013). Moreover, constructivists believe in a “value-oriented” rationality (Choi 2015) which, in contrast to the rationalists’ instrumental rationality, is “based
on practical reason, is sensitive and contingent to historical, social, and normative contexts, and emphasizes the communicative and persuasive logic in social theory” (Adler 2013:124).

In a constructivist approach, norms are constitutive of interests and identities, and also define the range of alternatives (March and Olsen 2011; Wunderlich 2013). It must be said that this discussion is both necessary and contradictory for a constructivist. To treat causalities and explanatory factors in this way is to describe the constructivist view of norms in international politics in rationalist language. While it resonates with the thinner approaches of constructivism, it is at odds with the thicker, more post-structural strands of constructivism as it lies in the nature of this approach to view norms, interests and identities as mutually constitutive (Björkdahl 2013) and not to put much emphasis or interest in causal relationships. Nonetheless, in a comparison with rationalism, it is reasonable to make this distinction and highlight how constructivists understand norms as higher in the hierarchy than interests and more foundational to understanding international political life.

Despite these rather fundamental differences, or possibly because of them, many scholars agree that most international outcomes cannot not be fully explained by only looking through a rational or a constructivist lens (Choi 2015). Indeed, several attempts have been made to find fruitful marriages between the two approaches (Choi 2015; O’Faircheallaigh 2013). Naturally, most attempts at this kind of theoretical marriage have taken place between rationalism and what Checkel (2013) calls “conventional constructivism”, which already leans towards positivism and is thus similar to what other scholars call the thin, weak or modernist programme. Proponents of using the two approaches together argue that it is a mistake to continue to view constructivism and rationalism as alternative approaches that offer alternative explanations (O’Faircheallaigh 2013). Instead, the debate between constructivism and rationalism should be redefined into a conversation in which the objective is not to dominate or denigrate the other approach and demonstrate the supremacy of one theory in relation to the other, but rather to “combine insights, cross boundaries and, if possible, synthesize specific arguments in hope of gaining more compelling answers and a better picture of reality” (Fearon and Wendt 2002:68; see also Checkel 2013). As is shown below, this thesis is somewhat inspired by such a “conversation” and acknowledges that rational logics may also be useful for studying norms.

Against the back-drop of constructivist standpoints and foundations, the next section focuses more specifically on norm research within IR. It describes how the research agenda has emerged and how within this field of research there is space for different views on various norm-related aspects, such as the nature of the norm, how norm evolution might be modeled and whether it is primarily agency or structure that determines the outcome of norm emergence.
2.4. Studying norms in International Relations

Much of the IR research on norms takes place within a constructivist tradition. Norms, in a constructivist approach, can serve as a constituent of interest formation or international cooperation (Björkdahl 2002b; Klotz 1995b). As such, understanding how norms evolve is of keen interest to International Relations scholars because norm effects capture aspects of behavior in the international system that cannot be fully explained by material and rational arguments alone (see for example Katzenstein 1996b). The added value of constructivist research on norms has shown that norms, and actors’ normative understanding of norms, constitute an enabling aspect or hindrance of how world politics takes place (Adler 2013). Many constructivist norm scholars would suggest that world politics cannot be understood without considering the emergence and diffusion of norms.

This sub-section below examines norm research in IR scholarship, with the aims of both putting this study in greater context and building an argument for the framework presented in chapter 3.

2.4.1. The “two waves” of norm research

The evolution of norm studies in International Relations is sometimes described as having occurred in two waves (Hoffman 2010). The first wave, primarily in the 1980s and 1990s, was first and foremost a way to challenge rationalist explanations of international politics. It was argued that norms, or ideas, provided important and equal (or superior) explanatory weight compared to material interests (Goldstein and Keohane 1993). Norms at this time were treated as independent, explanatory variables, and also as having an independent status and an inherent, direct and predominant power over other aspects of international political life (Finnemore 1996; Katzenstein 1996a; Klotz 1995a). Furthermore, norms were treated as fairly static and unchangeable in nature. This contrasts with more recent research from the second wave of norm research (represented by, for example, Sandholtz 2008a; Wiener 2004, 2007, 2009), which views the nature and meaning of norms as constantly contested and changing. Overall, this dynamic view of norms – in terms of the unfixed meaning of the norm itself as well as its mutual influence on and exchange with its context over time – is distinctive to this second wave of IR norm research. The first wave was generally more structural since it developed in response to more material and rational explanations of international processes, and as it largely complied with the structural “logic of appropriateness” (see above and March and Olsen 1998; 2011). The second wave, is more actively concerned with a debate on the relationships between structure, actors and norms, and writers from the second wave can be differentiated by their different stance on these matters: that is, which of these elements constitute the other and how independent actors can be in relation to norms.
During the latter phase of the first wave, and especially during the second wave, strategic agency and the role of norm entrepreneurs in norm evolution were recognized. This interest has persisted to this day, but with an increasing focus on contestation of norms and how agents, structures and norms affect, reflect and shape each other (Hoffman 2010; Wunderlich 2013). The thin/thick division in constructivism overlaps in some respects with the first and second wave of norm research, where many scholars from the first wave could be considered more thin than the norm scholars of the second wave, but they are not entirely translatable as these somewhat artificial divisions are not concerned with exactly the same thing. Where the thin and thick strands of constructivism are concerned with different approaches to the philosophy of science and the drivers of change, the first and second wave of norm research can be distinguished from each other primarily through their view on the nature of the norm as static or constantly changing, and the questions they ask. For instance, first wave scholars were primarily interested in the use of norms to explain world politics (in debates with realists and liberals), while the second wave turned to a more internal debate within the field and focused more on the construction and contestation of norms as well as on compliance and diffusion (Hoffman 2010). So, while it has just been stated that this thesis can be primarily placed within the thin tradition of constructivism, many other writers from the thin constructivist schools, such as modernism or pragmatic realism, can be found in the first wave of norm research, and thus have an understanding of the nature of the norm with which this thesis does not agree. On the contrary, this study understands norms and their content as susceptible to change throughout the emergence process — and, like second wave norm scholars, that contestation is an important part of norm formulation and clarification. Moreover, this study emphasizes the importance of strategic agency, which is a more prominent feature of the second wave.

After this brief description of the emergence of norm research in International Relations, the next sub-section introduces what this thesis calls the “standard approach” to explaining norm acceptance and discusses the different ways in which writers have tried to model and illustrate norm evolution.

2.4.2. Norm evolution and models

Throughout the history of norm research, many writers have attempted to model norm evolution. In doing so, authors have proposed how norms emerge, are adopted at the international level, and are subsequently internalized in the

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8 Cortell and Davis Jr. (2000) have also described IR norm research as occurring in two waves. Their narrative is slightly different, in which the first wave limits its interest to norms as intervening variables at the international level while the second wave focuses on how the interaction between international norms and domestic processes shapes state behaviour.
workings of the international system and/or at the national level. The norm life cycle model of Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) is the most prevalent of the models and illustrates this process in different stages.

The norm life cycle proposes a process of three different stages – emergence, cascade and internalization – through which a new norm “travels” to reach a point of such wide and fundamental acceptance that it is taken for granted and largely complied with (see Figure 1). The norm life cycle is made up of very few components. According to the model, a number of factors explain a norm’s movement through the whole cycle. First, norm entrepreneurs with an organizational platform persuade stakeholders – primarily states – to accept the norm. A tipping point (the point where the number of accepting states or other stakeholders starts to accelerate) occurs when “one-third of the total states in the system” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998:901), including states which are critical to the adoption of the particular norm at hand, adopt the norm. This tipping point marks the initiation of a cascade, whereby the accepting states, which have now become norm leaders, together with the norm entrepreneurs attempt to socialize other states to become norm followers through “emulation (of heroes), praise (for behavior that conforms to group norms), and ridicule (for deviation)” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998:902). In the last stage, internalization, the norm reaches a taken-for-granted status and is no longer questioned or debated (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). The article in International Organization which presented the norm life cycle is now 20 years old and has been subject to both praise and critique over those two decades (see below). Nonetheless, the norm life cycle still stands as the most cited model used to illustrate and describe norm evolution. This makes it a natural and useful starting point for theoretically approaching norms.

![Figure 1. The Norm life cycle, adapted from Finnemore and Sikkink 1998:896.](image)

Over the years, other scholars have attempted to build on and improve the norm life cycle. Knight (2011) argues that the stages of norm evolution in the norm life cycle are underspecified. Knight maps the evolution of the norm of the “responsibility to protect” largely in accordance with the norm life cycle, but extends it to five stages: the conception stage, the normative contestation or normative ‘fit’ stage, the diffusion/cascading stage, the internalization and
institutionalization stage, and the resistance, accommodation or dissolution stage.

Gest et al. (2013) focus in on the norm emergence stage using different norms on migrants’ rights as case studies. Their research criticizes the failure of earlier norm research to properly specify the process of norm emergence and suggests a more detailed depiction of the different sub-steps of the first stage of the norm life cycle: agenda setting, consolidation of support, institutional approach, negotiation, adoption and commitment. Gest et al. is helpful, not only for specifying processes, but also in outlining a number of hindrances that can occur during the different stages of emergence identified. For instance, they identify obstacles such as: that the potential norm may have only limited global scope; the possibility of “treaty fatigue”, where similar propositions may have recently been examined; fear of new obligations or difficulties in ensuring broad adoption. At the agenda-setting stage, hindrances might arise if the issue is incorrectly framed, for example as a defense issue instead of a humanitarian issue; if advocates do not have access to decision-making forums; or if the media does not report the norm favorably. During the “consolidation of support”-stage, obstacles might include a lack of coordination among advocates or organized opposition to the proposal. Fourth, hindrances regarding the institutional approach and negotiations could include a lack of unity among advocates, the length and structure of negotiations or lack of funding. Finally, if the potential norm is about to reach the final stages of emergence – adoption and commitment – possible hindrances include a fear that new rights will undermine existing rights, that there are different conditions for implementation in different countries or even direct resistance from member states.

Risse and Sikkink (1999), build further on the ideas and mechanisms inherent in the norm life cycle. They suggest a “spiral model” which shows how international human rights norms have been accepted and incorporated into the domestic policies of initially norm violating states. The model suggests that this can happen through so-called boomerang effects, a concept of boomerang effects was introduced by Keck and Sikkink (1998) that refers to the phenomenon where domestic interest groups get help from outside interest groups to exert external pressure on their governments. Alternatively, the outside interest group can encourage its own respective governments to put pressure on another state on a certain issue.

2.4.3. Critique of the norm life cycle

Over the years, the norm life cycle and other standard approaches to understanding norm evolution have been subject to both praise and criticism – the latter often from so-called second wave norm research (see above). Some critiques originate from viewpoints belonging to the thick side of constructivism.
One set of critiques argues that the norm life cycle rests on too static an understanding of norms and neglects the “argumentative” element. This critique argues that norms are constantly changing and should be regarded as processes rather than determined “things” (Jose 2017). The literature on “normative contestation” is key in this critique and refers to the debate around the inherent meaning of a norm that occurs when stakeholders have different understandings about its meaning and objectives. Contemporary writers on norms even argue that contestation is a natural and beneficial process through which norms are created and modified. In the book *The Invisible Constitution of Politics: Contested Norms and International Encounters*, Wiener (2008) studies three fundamental types of norms – citizenship, democracy and human rights – to show how contestation is an inherent and necessary part of norm emergence, evolution and acceptance. She argues that actors have different understandings and interpretations of the meaning of a certain norm, depending on their respective identities, backgrounds and contexts. Contestation reveals those differences and can advance common understandings and broad adoption (Wiener 2008). Krook & True (2012) argue that a process model of norms must take into account how norms change and evolve during their life cycle. They propose what they call “internal and external dynamism”, which attempts to incorporate how the content of the norm is both directly and indirectly affected by different factors. Lantis (2011) puts the spotlight on political elites and emphasizes the role they play in contesting and reformulating a norm before possible adoption.

Building further on the dynamics of contestation, another strand of critique targets the linearity of the norm life cycle (Krook and True 2012; McKeown 2009; Sandholtz 2008b). Sandholtz, for instance, starts with the critique that the norm life cycle and similar models view norms primarily in terms of outcomes. By using the example of wartime plunder, he argues that arguments and norms – or rules – change *each other* in a circular, rather than a linear, cycle. In this model, arguments modify rules, but the changed rules set standards and conditions for future arguments (Sandholtz 2008b, 2008a). Sandholtz (2008b:19) writes:

> The cycle theory enables us to see that specific cases or episodes are linked forward and backward: each takes place in a context shaped by previous disputes, and each modifies the normative context for subsequent controversies.

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9 Engelkamp and Glaab (2015) take a poststructuralist stance and even argue that by applying descriptions and concepts to norm evolution, norms will automatically be misconceived as they are then regarded as existing “things” rather than an ambiguous source of dialogue.
McKeown (2009) addresses the linearity of the life cycle by questioning internalization as the end point of a norm’s life. The norm life cycle, McKeown suggests, must be complemented by what he calls a norm death series, which also accounts for norm regress.10

Bucher (2014) criticizes the lack of transparency regarding agency in the norm life cycle. He means that the norm life cycle is formulated with the norm as the subject. The norm “emerges”, “tips”, “cascades”, and so on, almost on its own, without a meaningful account of power relations and agency. According to Bucher, changing the language and syntax when describing norm diffusion can provide a more accurate and adequate account of the process and the role of agency.11 As we shall see below, however, this too does not go far enough in stipulating the relationship between norms and agency.

A more general critique of constructivist norm research, but with reference to the norm life cycle, was set out by Payne (2001) and Hofferberth & Weber (2015). Payne notes that most constructivists seem to have forgotten about power and material interests. He argues that the element of persuasion, which is central in models of norm diffusion, is not driven by ideology, as suggested by Finnemore & Sikkink, but rather by the most powerful actors’ own interests and preferences. Hofferberth & Weber critique both the norm life cycle and the spiral model for not addressing or explaining how norms emerge in the first place. Like Sandholtz, they object to the fact that the direction of the process is only one way – progress towards internalization. In their opinion, there should be room for changes in direction and for the norm to be changed along the course of its life cycle.

This thesis takes on board much of the criticism of the norm life cycle described above: that the norm life cycle is overly simplistic, that it leaves out some essential features of the norm emergence process and that it primarily fulfills a descriptive – rather than an explanatory – function. There is an in-built assumption in the norm life cycle that norms that “tick the boxes” will automatically be successful, and in the same shape that they started the process. On the contrary, it is reasonable to acknowledge that norms can stagnate, regress and/or shift considerably in content – perhaps even after “full internationalization which is the endpoint of the norm life cycle.

The study here emphasizes that: (a) there are more obstacles and opportunities to norm evolution than accounted for in the “standard approach”; (b) that the early norm emergence stage needs further specification, and (c) the interactive role of agency and structure demands further attention. This latter issue requires a brief overview of the role of agency and structure in norm research.

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10 For more on the regression, reversion, degeneration and the death of internalized norms, see Panke and Petersohn (2011; 2016) and Wunderlich (2013).

11 Further discussion on Bucher’s view on agency in norm emergence follows later in this chapter.
2.4.4. Agency and structure in norm acceptance

The above discussion on thick and thin constructivism – as well as the evolutionary waves of norm research – touched on a central debate in this field: whether agents or structures matter more in norm emergence and acceptance. As described above, constructivism initially emerged as a critique of realism’s emphasis on rational actors, rational choice and individual state interests. As part of this critique, constructivism made the notion of norms part of this strand of thinking. Initially, writers in the early “constructivist turn” set out to “solve” the agency-structure debate within the field of IR at large – or at least to provide a more structural answer to it (Hoffman 2010). Therefore, it could be argued that in relation to realist or liberal approaches, all constructivists lean towards structural explanations. However, within constructivism and norm research, actors can be placed along a wide spectrum of structural vs agency-based perspectives on norms.

While the agency-structure debate has been part of constructivism and norm research all along – and has never been resolved – the eagerness to shed light on structural factors of international politics and norm emergence had a tendency to eclipse agency from the equation. Some writers have argued that the tendency to focus more on either structure or agency is paradoxical from a constructivist point of view, since most constructivists are interested in the interplay of actors and their surrounding structures (Adler 2013). Constructivism is interested in the becoming of politics (Adler 2013; Guzzini 2005), and that becoming or construction is – if you will – made up of a constant interplay between intentions and context – or actors and structures. While a natural stance for many constructivist is that structures largely determine outcomes, it thus also makes sense for a constructivist to stress that the social world is created in an interplay between, and thus mutually constituted by, agency and structure (Bucher 2014; Sending 2002; Wendt 1987).

In constructivism and norm research, the agency-structure debate has shifted like a pendulum where one side has been more strongly emphasized at various times, usually accompanied by the typical argument that one side has been neglected. The second wave of norm research (see above) saw an internal division and norm scholars taking stronger positions regarding agency and structure (Hoffman 2010). Hoffman (2010) described this not as a spectrum of structure or agency but as a spectrum of “reasoning through” or “reasoning about” norms; that is, how independent the actor is expected to be in relation to norms and structures. At one end of the spectrum, actors can never detach themselves from the pre-existing norms connected to their identity and it is thus assumed that such structures steer their actions. At the other end, it is argued that actors can take an independent position in relation to norms and

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12 Indeed, realism also relies on structures in its emphasis on anarchy (Reus-Smit and Snidal 2008). Nonetheless, realism believes that material and national interests are the drivers of action and change, which is more agential and intentional than normative drivers of the same.
thus reason about which norms are desirable and how they should be promoted or pursued. The most recent turn in this debate has seen a number of writers argue that structure has been given too much emphasis in constructivist thinking and a deeper understanding of actors is needed. The call to “bring agency back in”, of course, is not new (see Checkel 1998; Klotz 1995b for instance) but the call seems to have resurfaced and started to gain strength again recently (see for example Acharya 2014; Bucher 2014; Müller and Wunderlich 2013).

These recent texts with an emphasis on agency suggest that norm evolution and adoption cannot be understood without understanding agency, and these writers have put much attention on understanding different kinds of actors and norm entrepreneurs. In earlier works on norms, a norm entrepreneur was often understood as an actor operating primarily from outside the direct policy sphere, such as epistemic communities, NGOs and other interest groups (see for example Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Haas 1992), and the role of these actors was mainly attributed to the first phase of the norm life cycle. The more recent works on norms have broadened the concept of norm entrepreneur, suggesting that many types of actors can play that role. In addition, the boundaries between when and how entrepreneurs work are also being increasingly blurred, as a number of recent writers have suggested that agency is key at all stages of the norm evolution, adoption and internalization processes (Acharya 2014; Björkdahl 2008, 2013; Fukuda-Parr and Hulme 2011; Karlsrud 2013; Müller and Wunderlich 2013; Nay 2012; Rushton 2008).

A main argument in Müller & Wunderlich’s book Norm Dynamics in Multilateral Arms Control: Interests, Conflicts, and Justice (2013) is that norms cannot be treated as independent entities. The authors, like many others, describe norm evolution as having different phases (establishment, further development and degeneration, p. 27ff) but it is also stated in the book that: “In each phase, norms do not change automatically. The factors just discussed do not work like forces in physics, such as impulse, pressure, or gravity. They need human agency to gain social meaning and take effect.” (Müller 2013b:13). In the introductory chapter of the book, Müller (2013b), like Bucher (2014, discussed further below), admits that constructivism is often accused of having a structuralist bias but argues that this is not intrinsic to constructivist assumptions. On the contrary, Müller argues that constructivism itself emphasizes agency as much as structure. The meaning of norms is contested and formulated by actors and actors have the potential to confirm, change and revolutionize norms and normative structures. Moreover, Müller & Wunderlich (2013) argue that the legitimacy and prominence of norms can be boosted by external events that make the new norm seem more urgent and desirable. However, the concluding chapter of Müller & Wunderlich’s book argues that all other factors (such as external events, technological changes and regime conflicts) lose their impact if not coupled with actor engagement. Actors respond and adapt to these circumstances and thus shape the exact way
such factors affect outcomes. The authors also point out that actors need to be strategic in timing of their actions and how they seize opportunities.

McCourt (2016) argues that while the constructivist turn was initially fairly broad in scope, it has become ontologically, epistemologically, methodologically and empirically narrowed along the way. Therefore, McCourt has launched the “new constructivism” in which he includes the “practice turn” as well as relationism. The practice turn focuses on the process of “making norms” through everyday practices, arguing that habit and routine help actors to order a complex social world and are thus stronger shapers of norms than interests and identity (McCourt 2016; see also Adler and Pouliot 2011 for more on practices).

Bucher (2014) makes the argument that while some writers claim to focus on agency, their approaches and use of language still put the norm itself center stage and eclipse agency. Using the norm life cycle as backdrop, Bucher argues that while agency (primarily through norm entrepreneurs) is present during the norm emergence stage, the norm becomes the subject of the model thereafter. Concepts such as critical mass of states, tipping point and cascade are described as arising more or less automatically or with the norm itself as the agent (language such as “the norm tips” and “the norm cascades” are examples of agency attributed to the norm). It is not only Finnemore & Sikkink who can be accused of using language to describe norm evolution in this way. Bucher gives a list of examples of how writers on norms consistently use metaphors and concepts to describe norms in ways that frame norms as independent, as well as intrinsic intent and power. Even writers who claim to focus on actors and agency adhere to this linguistic pitfall. Bucher further argues that treating norms this way is problematic because ignoring actors and agency consequently also eclipses power relations. Bucher’s conclusion is therefore that power needs to be reintroduced into empirical and theoretical research on norms and that these developments must be understood in terms of “norm politics” (Bucher 2014).

Agency, in this strand of thinking, mainly refers to norm entrepreneurs and policymakers (the latter are often states). The distinction between entrepreneur and policymaker is not always clear cut, and entrepreneurs can come in many more shapes than a traditional interest group or NGO, which was often the shape of the entrepreneur in earlier works. In fact, much of the recent literature on this topic is devoted to describing norm entrepreneurs who are unexpected or norm entrepreneurship that works in unexpected ways, as well as influential norm entrepreneurs who have thus far been largely overlooked in the literature. Bower (2015) and Björkdahl (2008, 2013), for example, show how smaller states can also function as successful norm entrepreneurs. Bower (2015) uses the case of the ban on antipersonnel landmines and refers to historical cases to show that new norms can be adopted without the support of what he calls great powers, and even against the will of powerful states. Björkdahl argues that structure-oriented frameworks of norm evolution tend to see
the norm evolution process as something mechanical and inevitable. In her framework, Björkdahl focuses on agency in the form of norm entrepreneurs and shows how agency and structure are mutually constitutive. In her words: “the norm entrepreneur is constituted by pre-existing normative structures, while simultaneously constituting these structures” (Björkdahl 2013:324). She shows how Sweden, a small state in international politics, has taken on the role of norm entrepreneur in the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) when it comes to promoting the prevention of violent conflicts. Her analysis shows that Sweden has been relatively successful in this regard, contradicting the argument that new norms need the advocacy of powerful states in order to gain traction and effect in the international system. Moreover, Björkdahl asks why Sweden chose to take on the role of norm entrepreneur, and finds that it is an intentional foreign policy strategy based on Sweden’s foreign policy legacy and identity, as well as its desire to globally diffuse Swedish domestic values.

In short, a large part of the constructivist literature on norms in international affairs has re-emphasized the role of agents in the evolution of norms. This thesis similarly puts great emphasis on the necessity of agency throughout all stages of norm evolution for norm acceptance to occur. However, as the framework constructed in chapter 3 discusses in more detail, agents do not operate in free space. At all levels and in all aspects of norm emergence, agency is constrained or aided by a structural dimension. For instance, pre-existing norms influence actors and their behavior – but that does not mean that they are incapable of some detachment from those norms and structures. They are both reasoning through and reasoning about norms. This is especially true when we focus on agency in norm emergence as actors might reason through established norms in order to reason about new norms and norm propositions. In this way, the theoretical framework in this thesis emphasizes agency but recognizes its interplay with structural dimensions with regard to all factors in the framework.

2.5. The insufficiency of existing approaches

Having located this study in relation to traditional studies of international outcomes, the constructivist turn in IR generally and the specific agenda on the role of norms in international affairs, this chapter concludes with a summary of the key insufficiencies of existing approaches to norms.

While the norm life cycle is undoubtedly useful for an overall understanding of norm evolution, a quick glance at the cases selected for this study soon make it evident that the norm life cycle alone provides unsatisfactory answers for a full understanding of the reception of the norm propositions on protecting climate-induced migrants and disaster risk reduction. There are several reasons for this. First, understanding these cases – as well as understanding the
success or failure of norm acceptance – requires an understanding of the path leading up to the tipping point, a pivotal moment in the norm life cycle. The norm life cycle offers very little guidance or detail on the factors at work at this stage, other than brief consideration of norm entrepreneurs and their persuasive efforts. While one of the strengths attributed to the norm life cycle is its simplicity, which makes it applicable to a range of different norms in different areas, the simplicity of the model leaves the researcher short of tools to fully understand the complexity of a certain case. The emergence stage of the norm life cycle is given only superficial attention, and offers the reader very little guidance to understand why cases might fail to reach later stages. As the case studies below show, this does not help explain why these propositions have evolved in the precise way they have. For instance, both cases are alike in that they have both had highly engaged entrepreneurs with well-established organizational platforms and clear access to policy makers. The norm emergence stage is crucial for understanding norm evolution in both cases, and a framework which pays more attention to this phase is therefore required.

A second weakness of the norm life cycle is that it is primarily a descriptive rather than an explanatory model, and it can best be used to identify certain points retrospectively in the cycle of successful norms. In additionally, the norm life cycle focuses very much on the internal, micro-mechanisms within the process, such as socialization, and very little on the influence of surrounding institutional, societal and political contexts. Any attempt to use the norm life cycle as a tool to explain the outcome of norm emergence would thus fall short. In fact, without the incorporation of those essential contextual factors, it is difficult even to use the norm life cycle to fully understand the evolution of a new norm.

Third, the fact that norm propositions need support from entrepreneurs to become accepted is indisputable. However, few studies take into account the power of contentious processes and resistance to the new norm, which limits the explanatory strength of such approaches. A number of writers have highlighted the role of contestation during norm emergence, but many scholars treat it as an arduous but necessary element of norm formation. Resistance, however, is of a somewhat different nature, in that it concerns outright conflict regarding the fundamental desirability of the norm proposition itself. Accounting for resistance in an explanatory framework would thus be important, especially – it might be expected – for explaining failed norm acceptance.

Fourth, and most importantly, the accounts reviewed above largely neglect the importance of contingencies. Some existing norm research has found that external events such as disasters, terrorist attacks or changes in technology can have a focusing effect, especially on public awareness (see for example Gest et al. 2013; Müller 2013a; Müller, Fey, and Rauch 2013). Others have briefly mentioned the timing element – a window of opportunity – as favorable, and even necessary, for norm advancement (see for example Björkdahl 2002a; Jose 2017; Wunderlich 2013). Rather surprisingly, however, these different
depictions of the contingency element are only mentioned in passing, in highly general terms, and left out of the theoretical frameworks. Moreover, these accounts do not systematize or further theorize how or why contingencies influence norm evolution in a way that is useful for other norm scholars. This is surprising since when considering, for example, the notion of a “tipping point”, it is hard to ignore unexpected events and contingencies, given that such occurrences can quickly alter the political landscape, as well as states’ objectives and agendas regarding norms. To understand tipping points, cascades and internalization (essential elements of norm evolution) it is imperative to understand why states and policy stakeholders would prioritize one specific proposition ahead of another, and why the norm entrepreneurs’ arguments for adopting the norm might seem attractive or unattractive. The component of contingencies is also expected to contribute to an understanding of why one norm tips but not another (if there is indeed such an inevitable process) or why some norms are successful in only a few years when other take many decades.

Contingencies are here understood as a general category of components which are more or less random in character and which intervene in the norm emergence process. More specifically, contingencies can be recognized as more or less unexpected external events which attract significant attention and which serve to increase the salience of a norm proposition (Schedler 2007; Shapiro and Bedi 2007). Contingencies, as they are understood and employed here, open up a so-called window of opportunity for change (for a policy-related theorization of the concept see Kingdon 1995).

This chapter has raised a number of criticisms and outlined several weaknesses in the “standard approach” to norm emergence. Table 2 lists the key weaknesses of the norm life cycle and similar approaches, together with a description of why these are problematic in terms of understanding cases of norm formation in international politics. As discussed above, this thesis aligns with the growing array of norm research that questions how the norm life cycle could be developed and updated as a better fit for explanatory purposes. Specifically, by specifying key aspects of norm emergence – and especially by properly including the components of contingencies and windows of opportunity in the theoretical approach – this thesis adds further theoretical content to the debate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Why it is a problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The norm emergence stage is underspecified</td>
<td>The possibility of norm acceptance is highly dependent on developments at the emergence stage. A lack of specificity and the account of too few and too general factors provide little guidance for explaining outcomes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Key deficits in standard approaches to explaining norm emergence and acceptance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deficit</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Norm life cycle models are too automatic</td>
<td>When norm processes are described as axiomatic or when the norm itself as a subject is given center stage, depictions of norm emergence tend to exclude intervening factors and driving forces, agency and in particular actors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Too little attention is paid to resistance</td>
<td>The efforts of opponents to resist or undermine a norm proposition have the potential to outdo the efforts of norm entrepreneurs or other favorable conditions in terms of norm formation. If this component is excluded from analytical frameworks, explanations for failed or stalled norm propositions are likely to fall short.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The influence of contingencies is not theorized</td>
<td>If the surrounding societal events and contextual factors are not systematically accounted for or included in analytical frameworks on norm emergence, the analyst loses the ability to explain the power of joint effects and timing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chapter began with an overview of how constructivism and a greater focus on norms came to take a prominent place in the field of International Relations. The chapter then outlined previous approaches to understanding norm acceptance and the use of existing models to do so. The final section of the chapter identified key deficits in existing approaches. These constitute the foundation on which the framework proposed in this thesis is built.

Chapter 3 sets out this analytical framework. By refining and updating key variables from the norm life cycle and following writers on norms and – most importantly, adding a proper theorization of contingency variables, a framework is proposed that provides not only crucial insights for understanding the cases in this study, but also the next step on a long journey that takes norm research closer to fully understanding how a norm proposition moves from formulation to norm acceptance. The case studies will function as probes to evaluate the plausibility and potential explanatory value of the framework at large and regarding the component of contingencies and windows of opportunity in particular. As a whole, this thesis thus aims to contribute to existing research on norms and provide future researchers with an enhanced tool for explaining norm emergence.
3. Analyzing norm acceptance

Chapter 2 painted a diverse picture of the constructivist landscape and how this is reflected in the different strands of norm research. This chapter, and the framework constructed below, demonstrates how this thesis relates to this landscape and the different assumptions upon which the framework is built. First, this study leans towards thin, rather than thick, constructivism. From this follows the position that independent variables determine the outcome of the dependent variables and that these mechanisms can, in some sense, be studied. Furthermore, this study will reflect that rationalist logics are partly relevant when studying the emergence, acceptance and diffusion of norms.

This chapter identifies a number of key factors as key to understanding norm change (see Table 3). Previous IR research has highlighted a range of factors as influential for norm formation, and the framework for this thesis selectively borrows from these. The framework constructed here takes the key variables from standard approaches (agency, the norm itself and framing), adds two more recent suggestions (venue and resistance) and, most importantly, adds the component of contingencies (including windows of opportunity). In so doing, the approach taken here borrows from fields outside of IR to complete the framework, in order to improve its relevance and explanatory power.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Description of factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Actors (mainly norm entrepreneurs) initiate, advocate and attempt to drive the norm proposition towards acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The norm itself</td>
<td>The content, clarity, precision and scope of the norm proposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing</td>
<td>The links and connections between the norm proposition and established norms and policy areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue</td>
<td>The institutional home and/or platform for discussion in which discussion, negotiation and the progress of the norm proposition can take place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance</td>
<td>Different forms of neglect, opposition or defense of the status quo aimed at counteracting norm acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingencies</td>
<td>Events that intervene in the norm emergence process through linkages to the norm proposition. Such events might trigger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹³ The epistemological and ontological positions of this thesis are discussed further in chapter 4.
moments or periods of potential change, conceptualized as windows of opportunity.

Table 3. Components of norm acceptance

The framework presented here also introduces some dynamism into the relationships between the factors (see Figure 2). In doing so, it once again touches on the important debate on agency and structure. Agency features prominently in this framework, encompassing the work of norm entrepreneurs in particular, and the discussion below shows how this factor strongly affects other factors in the framework. Nonetheless, agency does not account for all the variations in each factor – structural conditions also matter. It is argued here that agency is indeed key to norm progress at each stage, but all types of agency are conditioned by structural preconditions and capacities. The discussion below disentangles the role of each factor and how it interplays with the other parts of the framework, highlighting the relationship between agency and structure while discussing how each can be operationalized. However, before the different explanatory variables of the framework are presented and discussed, the dependent variable of the study – norm acceptance – is further outlined and defined.

3.1. Norm acceptance: elaborating the dependent variable

This study is concerned with improving understanding of how and why processes of norm acceptance differ in outcome. The existing norm dynamics literature offers surprisingly little precise guidance on how to define and determine norm acceptance. Two main reasons might explain this lack of attention. One is that it might be relatively easy in an individual case study to assess whether a norm has reached acceptance or not, but it is much more difficult to determine a more general operationalization. After all, some norms and ideas are generally accepted and their inherent value statements abided by even though they have not necessarily been formalized in rules and laws. In other cases this was done long after their inherent values and essential goals have been accepted, while, in other instances, there are strictly formalized rules that are still not adhered to in international practices and which are not truly accepted in essence. Another reason for a lack of attention to norm acceptance per se is the priority placed on other aspects such as norm internalization, which generally treats norms as successful only to the extent that they take on a taken-for-granted status and compliance is widespread.

This thesis understands norm acceptance as the point in norm evolution when the norm is no longer a proposition but a standard which in its essence is considered desirable and which is no longer disputed by a large majority of stakeholders. There is an important distinction to be made here between
acceptance and implementation or actual change in behaviour. This distinction is particularly important when studying international norm diffusion since there might be a significant gap between the acceptance in principal by international actors (states, organizations or private sector companies) and the actual implementation at the domestic level.

The main focus of the framework constructed here is thus on norm acceptance. As the understanding of acceptance is diverse in the literature, two issues related to studying norm acceptance need to be unpacked: when in the norm evolution process norm acceptance occurs and, how norm acceptance can be recognized empirically.

On the first point, we can turn to Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) to help argue that norm acceptance takes place at the end point of a norm cascade (that is, when the norm has experienced a dramatic increase in support and acceptance, and the cascading process has arrived at a new – substantially higher – level) but before full internalization. (A norm that has reached acceptance does not have to have been internalized, but an internalized norm is always accepted.) Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) do not define norm acceptance as such but mention that this would occur during in the norm cascade stage.

In their study on sustainable development as a norm, Hadden and Seybert (2016) initially seem to consider widespread norm acceptance as the endpoint of Finnemore and Sikkink’s norm life cycle (thus equaling internalization). They later conclude, however, following their own results, that this norm: “did achieve widespread acceptance by states and institutionalization in treaties and international organizations. But its international support did not result in widespread consistency of action or conformity of behavior” (p. 251). The distinction they make based on their own study would thus indicate a separation between acceptance, institutionalization and behavior.

Other scholars also support the idea of distinguishing between acceptance and implementation and/or compliance. Finnemore, for instance, reiterates many of her arguments in her 1998 work in a later article with Hollis from 2016, in which they mention a “continuum of norm acceptance” (Finnemore and Hollis 2016:455). Moreover, the authors argue that what they call an “aura of legitimacy” of the new norm can “engender broader acceptance and perhaps even internalization” (p. 468), subtly highlighting to a distinction between acceptance and internalization. That said, it is not exactly clear what a cascade is indicated by. For instance, Finnemore and Hollis point to the rate of treaty acceptance, which is not entirely helpful, since the formulation and ratification of binding treaties seems to become increasingly rare in international politics.

Another example is the work of Gest et al. (2013), which distinguishes between adoption (including acceptance) and commitment (which includes implementation). The writers say that “adoption at the international level entails general acceptance of the normative agenda by states and possibly other stakeholders. But this support is not necessarily carried through to the next stage of
normative development” (p.171). By the “next stage” the writers mean commitment and implementation. Furthermore, they write: “the commitment stage includes the follow-through to ensure that the norm is implemented and upheld after its adoption. In the case of a legally binding treaty, this stage takes the form of ratification and implementation” (p. 171).

Navigating a confusing array of concepts related to various “end states” of norm evolution analysis, we can add to the definition above that: this thesis regards norm acceptance at the international level to be an intermediate step between emergence and implementation. The next aspect to be specified is how norm acceptance can be recognized empirically. On this aspect, too, the existing literature offers little precise guidance.

De Franco, Meyer and Smith (2015:996 n3) recognize norm acceptance as “political and cultural validation” and Knight (2011:19) describes the cascading effect after a tipping point as consisting of “widespread acceptance around the essential nature (and definition) of the norm”. In case studies generally, many use different kinds of regulations or formal agreements as signs of norm success. Such formalizations are used as indicators of norm acceptance or norm change and can come in the form of adoption at summits (such as EU subsidiarity adopted at the 1990 Maastricht summit, see Van Kersbergen and Verbeek 2007), or being reflected in conventions and charters of the UN (Wiener 2014) or in trial indictments and verdicts (such as the norms on wartime plunder first consolidated in the 1945-46 Nuremberg Trials, see Sandholtz 2008a).

Gest et al. (2013:161) suggest a range of productive outcomes following a kind of “continuum of acceptance”. They write:

Given this concern for the broader context of norm generation and the debatable criteria of success, this analysis concerned itself with productive outcomes. We organized these outcomes into five types: a shift in discourse, a change in the way an issue is discussed; the vernacularization of rights, or the creation and popularization of new language that facilitates the universal communication of grievance, shared experience, and collective advocacy; the rearticulation or reaffirmation of preexisting law; the creation of new commitments in the form of a new piece of international legislation or norms that introduce previously undocumented principles into the sphere of legal discourse (and perhaps statute); and the implementation of new law, or the enforcement of existing (but unpracticed) law.

Considering all the above suggestions, and recognizing that the essence of acceptance might come in different forms in different cases, acceptance can be empirically recognized as a point in which the norm has cascaded and stakeholders have demonstrated official support for a new norm (in contrast to opposition or neglect) and indicated a clear intention to follow it. At this point in the evolution of a norm, there should be a significant shift in how the norm is discussed. The new norm does not have to be completely taken for granted.
but discussions and statements should clearly demonstrate that support for the norm has become mainstream. In other words, support for the norm no longer needs to be justified while opposition needs to be defended. Formal agreements, regulations, conventions, and hard or soft laws can all serve as strong indicators that the norm proposition has been accepted within the international system, but in general terms this is not a strict requirement. Subsequent internalization and compliance build on acceptance – but acceptance does not necessarily follow through to such outcomes. These precepts must guide a detailed empirical analysis of each case.

The question then arises whether acceptance is a dichotomous situation or exists on a continuum, as suggested by Finnemore and Hollis (2016:455) and (Gest 2013:161). A norm proposition can be accepted to different extents with regards to the number of states that support it, the level of resistance or the level of inclusion in international laws and regulations. Nonetheless, in this thesis it is more helpful for analytical purposes to regard norm acceptance in a more or less dichotomous fashion. While there is no undoubtedly a sliding scale of more or less acceptance, for analytical purposes we must hold some measurements steady; that is, there is expected to be a point in time when there is undeniably more acceptance than not and when opposition to the norm has to be defended rather than the support of it.

Having clarified how this thesis understands the concept of norm acceptance (summarized in Box 1), we now move on to present the components of the framework that will serve as the explanatory tool in this thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1. Definitions of norm acceptance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norm acceptance is:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...the point in norm evolution when the norm is no longer a proposition but a standard which in its essence is considered desirable and which is no longer disputed by a large majority of stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm acceptance occurs:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...as an intermediate step between emergence and implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm acceptance is recognized as:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...a point after which the norm has cascaded and stakeholders have demonstrated official support for a new norm (in contrast to opposition or neglect) and indicated a clear intention to follow it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2. Explaining norm acceptance

3.2.1. Agency

The presentation of the analytical framework begins with this section on agency. The discussion primarily draws on insights on norm entrepreneurs, but has a broad understanding of the types of actors that can function as entrepreneurs. Norm entrepreneurs are not only understood not only as initiators, but also as advocates and drivers of the process at all stages of norm evolution. Norm entrepreneurs and their agency are deliberately chosen as the first factor in the framework as they are expected to influence the other factors in various ways. They are reflected on further below and summarized in Figure 2.

A large strand of the norm literature is aligned with the norm life cycle’s focus on norm entrepreneurs and their crucial role in the norm acceptance process. Indeed, norm entrepreneurs are central to most of the literature on norm adoption (even in literature that emphasizes structure and/or the independent power of the norm). They are described alternatively as introducers, persuaders, drivers and problem solvers (Björkdahl 2013; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Müller and Wunderlich 2013). A norm entrepreneur is an actor that is strongly engaged with the norm and has incentives to promote it. These incentives are often altruistic (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998) but may also be material (O’Fairchealllaigh 2013), a means to gain influence (such as Sweden’s incentives to influence EU policy on conflict prevention, see Björkdahl 2008) or bureaucratic (for example "message entrepreneurs", see Fukuda-Parr and Hulme 2011). The entrepreneur is often outside of the immediate policy making process, for example they may come from within an interest group, but may also be a politician or from the media (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998).

The notion of the norm entrepreneur is central and crucial not just to the norm life cycle approach, but in most studies on norm evolution. An entrepreneur’s leverage for influence is determined by at least three different dimensions. First, in order to successfully reach out with their message, the entrepreneurs must be well-respected, coordinated and unified in the pursuit of their objectives (see for example Björkdahl 2013; Gest et al. 2013). The status of entrepreneurs is most easily and reliably assessed empirically by how they are described by other stakeholders and the extent to which they are allowed access to policy actors. As Björkdahl (2013:333) writes, an entrepreneur must be considered “legitimate, credible, trustworthy, and possessing expert knowledge on the issue in question in order to be successful”. Whether the entrepreneurs are coordinated and unified in their aims can be assessed by

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14 For a longer discussion on how norms and interests are intertwined see chapter 2.
looking at how many activities (such as the production of reports, and the organization of events) are conducted jointly and whether the goals they express are consistent with each other.

The second dimension is entrepreneurs’ access to international policy forums. It is clear that for a norm proposition to move from the realm of civil society organizations and interest group networks to an accepted and formalized norm, it must at some point be presented to actors within the policy arena. This access can be measured empirically primarily by assessing whether there have been meetings or conferences between the norm entrepreneurs and the policy actors concerned. Other indicators might be that entrepreneurs have been invited to take part in roundtable discussions or even negotiations, either as active participants or as observers. One sign of indirect access is whether official policy statements and documents refer to reports, statements or other activities by entrepreneurs.

Björkdahl has written extensively on the topic of norm entrepreneurs (see for example Björkdahl 2008, 2013). She examines the strategies of small states as norm entrepreneurs to reveal how and why some actors begin advocating a norm, as well as the measures they take to spread it to other stakeholders. For entrepreneurs to be able to exert their influence on policy makers, they need both access to policymakers and legitimacy (which are addressed above), as well as platforms. A platform refers to the organization of norm entrepreneurs, and is the basis from which they work. They often act from within NGOs specifically formed to promote a certain norm or a certain type of norm. These organizations can be connected to other, similar organizations in networks. Norm entrepreneurs can also be found in international organizations with more general portfolios, which can provide platforms for norm entrepreneurship (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Gest et al. 2013; Keck and Sikkink 1998).

A third dimension concerns the activities of entrepreneurs aimed at giving the norm proposition impact (Gest et al. 2013). These efforts can be assessed via the publication of reports and investigations; the arranging of events such as conferences, meetings and seminars; the organization of demonstrations; and lobbying activities targeted at politicians. The purpose of such activities is to draw attention to the norm proposition and to persuade others to support it. As mentioned above, entrepreneurs must link and frame the norm proposition with already established norms in a way that policy actors find appealing. The type and impact of entrepreneurial-related activities can be examined through event reports and by interviewing relevant actors, as well as by measuring coverage in the media or references made in other reports or documents.15

15 The four paragraphs above are drawn from similar paragraphs in Jakobsson (2018:55, 59f; a text also produced within the scope of this PhD) and have been reused here with permission of the publisher.
If the entrepreneurs choose the wrong tactics, their activities might be counterproductive and the norm proposition might suffer in relation to other norms. Entrepreneurs are often dependent on back-up from supporting communities (such as epistemic communities or other interest groups) with the same goals. If this support fails, if the norm entrepreneurs are counteracted (see below) or if there is a lack of coordination or unity among the entrepreneurs, this is likely to undermine a norm proposition and lead to failure (Bailey 2008; Gest et al. 2013).

Rost-Rublee (2009) has used the empirical example of nuclear restraint and theoretical inspiration from social psychology to assess how norms are processed and the conditions that affect the influence of norms. She claims that “activation” is one of the main mechanisms through which norms are processed. Activation means that the norm has received high-level attention and focus, which can be achieved through a range of different activities to draw attention to the issue. Activation may be achieved through “spectacles”, such as civil disobedience, or through information campaigns and seminars, but can also be very subtle, by simply reminding policy makers of an adopted norm or of a norm proposition that seems to have fallen out of fashion (Rost-Rublee 2009:45f).

Clearly, agency via the role of norm entrepreneurs features prominently in the account so far, and is assumed to have an influence to various extents over all other components, as is discussed below. A brief preview of the impact of agency is useful here. First, the efforts and objectives of norm entrepreneurs are key in nearly all aspect of the norm itself. Norm entrepreneurs identify, formulate (at least initially), defend, contest (against other stakeholders or opponents), clarify and define a norm proposition. Second, entrepreneurs play a role in strategically framing the norm. Using the active mechanism of linking (Rost Rublee 2009), entrepreneurs purposively link the norm proposition to other norms and issue areas. Third, as framing, in turn, determines venue and institutionalization, actors can frame a norm proposition more or less strategically in order to steer towards a suitable venue – or the venue with the best prospects (Coleman 2011; Rhinard 2010). Fourth, resistance to norm emergence also involves a form of agency. It can be regarded as the other side of the coin or the other end of a continuum in terms of agency. Resistance is – of course – also a form of agency. To the extent that there is resistance to or neglect of a norm proposition, norm entrepreneurs are important to overcoming these challenges. This can be done through different strategies such as persuasion, socialization, legitimation and/or “shaming” (Checkel 2001, 2007; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Risse and Ropp 1999) for instance but entrepreneurs are also expected to use clarification, information or reframing.

In short, entrepreneurs are seen here not only as initial instigators of norm emergence, but also as the actors driving developments forward and the ones maintaining stakeholders’ interest – all this through activities, activation and linking. As will be returned to below, norm entrepreneurs are also the actors
which would be most likely – often necessary – to exploit unexpected contingencies that open up windows of opportunity, and to make use of those windows in order to push a norm proposition forward. Given this argument, it should be noted that it is not assumed that the norm entrepreneurs will stay the same throughout a norm’s entire lifetime, nor that the same types of actors function as entrepreneurs in different cases. This means that the term “entrepreneur” is used here to denote promoters of the norm at various stages and in all settings of the process even though the roles and incentives of different promoters may vary. This differs somewhat from other writers on norms, who make a distinction between different types of advocates. Fukuda-Parr and Hulme (2011), for instance, distinguish between what they call norm entrepreneurs driven by ideational convictions and “message entrepreneurs” – who are supporters of the norm proposition within international organizations but primarily driven by institutional commitments and whose primary aim is to achieve consensus (and avoid controversy) rather than to protect the content of the norm. The message entrepreneur is an essential player in transforming a norm proposition into an established norm. The approach taken here agrees with the imperative importance of “message entrepreneurs” but in order not to overcomplicate an already conceptually dense framework, and because this distinction is not central to the analysis, the term norm entrepreneur is used to describe all kinds of advocacy actors.

In this thesis, norm entrepreneurs and their actions are considered key to understanding the evolution and possible acceptance of norms, and theory suggests that the existence of norm entrepreneurs is necessary for norm acceptance. Norm entrepreneurs may vary from few to many; from low engagement to high engagement; from isolated to coordinated; from low to high levels of legitimacy in relation to other stakeholders; and from having no access to policymakers to being states or policymakers themselves. Moreover, from what the previous descriptions of norm entrepreneurs above taught us, it can be assumed that the more engaged and coordinated norm entrepreneurs are and the more access they have, the more significance norm entrepreneurs will have for other factors and thus on the outcome of norm acceptance.

Against this background, a number of questions can be derived which allow for the case material to be assessed on this point:

- Which are the key actors in initiating the norm proposition and making the norm claims, persuading stakeholders, maintaining interest and, where possible, exploiting windows of opportunity?
- Are these actors well-respected and well-coordinated with access to policymakers?
- In what ways have they pursued their objectives of promoting the norm proposition?
- In what ways has agency interacted with other components and dimensions of this analytical framework?
3.2.2. The norm itself: content and clarity

The nature of the norm itself is critical to understanding norm acceptance. Specifically, the clarity of the norm proposition matters for its chances of being adopted and accepted. This factor includes different aspects of norm clarity and how it can be measured. Most importantly, the formulation of the norm itself should be clear and specific (rather than complex, vague and/or ambiguous) (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Legro 1997) with relatively straightforward implications. If the causal pathways of a proposition are clear – that is, how causes and effects interact and what the consequences would be of addressing the proposition – then it is assumed here that there will be greater leverage to gain traction for the proposition and a greater possibility of approval, given that these causal pathways seem appealing (Keck and Sikkink 1998). The “goodness” of a norm, which essentially means its legitimacy, is also important since the legitimacy of a norm must be understood through its framing and connection to other norms that are considered good (Florini 1996). This is discussed further under the factor of framing.

The clarity of the norm is sometimes present in empirical depictions of norm success and failure but, surprisingly, it is rarely included in analytical frameworks. A recent empirical example that clearly shows the problems for norm diffusion brought about by poor clarity, especially in terms of implementation, is the case of the responsibility to protect (R2P) in the EU. While the EU has in principle has approved the desirability of the R2P, it has struggled to implement it and properly adopt it. De Franco, Meyer, and Smith (2015) have shown that the ambiguity, complexity and lack of distinctiveness
of the norm have been highly detrimental to norm implementation as there is no consensus on how to interpret the norm or how the norm can be distinguished from other tangible norms, such as conflict prevention.

This thesis thus argues that definitional and causal clarity are important – not only for implementation, but also for progression throughout the norm emergence process. A clear norm proposition with specified scope and definitions is more likely to gain traction and attention; it unifies – and thus strengthens – norm entrepreneurs and facilitates negotiation. An interesting additional insight into the “nature of the norm” discussion comes from scholars studying norm contestation. Several authors (for example Wiener 2008, 2014) argue, perhaps somewhat counterintuitively, that the more a norm is contested in the early stages of its lifetime, the clearer and more easily understandable it becomes to a wider public, because argumentative processes lead to a sharper articulation and defense of what the norm stands for.

Thus far, the nature of the norm has been discussed and its link to entrepreneurs, for instance through formulation and clarification of the norm proposition, explored – but the latter factor is not only linked to agency. Structural and contextual factors also condition variations in this factor. How a new norm is understood in terms of definition, conceptualization, and causal pathways is reliant on the state of existing knowledge. In other words, whether the norm itself is exceptionally clear and understandable, or alternatively vague and complicated, has much to do with the state of conceptual tools and the empirical experience available to comprehend it.

Variations in the norm itself are linked to other factors. For instance, as is discussed further under the section on contingencies, a norm proposition should have reached a certain level of “maturity”, especially with regard to its definition (and its effects if acted on) for it to be ready to take a leap forward in terms of norm acceptance during a window of opportunity. The norm itself is also expected to interact with resistance in different ways. It has been mentioned above that contestation is a natural part of a norm’s clarification and of its path to broader acceptance. It is not helpful for the norm proposition, however, if contestation becomes too long-winded or polarized. Another issue raised by the relationship between the norm itself and resistance is whether clarity (or lack of clarity) leaves more or less room for resistance. While a high level of clarity regarding a norm proposition is advantageous for its acceptance, a clear norm proposition may also become the target of outspoken

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16 In this regard it should be noted that there are also writers who argue that norm ambiguity is beneficial as it constitutes a source of dialogue (Engelkamp and Glaab 2015) or because it facilitates consensus and compliance, based on the assumption that an ambiguous formulation makes the norm more flexible and allows it to be “incrementally adjusted over time” (Widmaier and Glanville 2015:368).
resistance. Legitimacy (which is discussed further under framing) can function as an intervening factor here: a clear norm proposition with a high degree of legitimacy and uncontroversial framing is — naturally — expected to meet less resistance than a clear norm with low levels of legitimacy and a sensitive framing. An unclear norm proposition can be more inclusive as it leaves more room for interpretation, as suggested by Widmaier and Glanville (2015), but it is not beneficial in terms of formalization or acceptance. Rather than outspoken resistance, poor clarity is expected to put the norm proposition at risk of de-prioritization or neglect, as few stakeholders will fully understand it.

In terms of operationalization, the factor of the norm itself and its clarity can be assessed by the actual wording of the norm proposition as articulated in texts and proposals, by noting signs of disputes (among entrepreneurs or between entrepreneurs and policymakers) regarding definitions, by examining whether actors express confusion about what the norm entails, or by examining whether relevant actors assign different attributes to the norm proposition. Such features would indicate a lack of clarity.

This variable thus implies that the norm proposition can vary between simple and complex, be narrow or wide in scope and have unclear or clear content and meaning. Furthermore, the variations in this variable are expected to have implications for the length of the norm acceptance process. For instance, a simple norm with clear content, clear implications and narrow scope is expected to have a shorter path to acceptance than a complex and broad norm proposition with poor clarity. Indeed, according to this operationalization, the latter type of norm might not achieve acceptance at all.

Against this background, a number of questions can be derived which allows for the material on each case to be assessed on this point:

- Are the definition, content and causal pathways of the norm proposition considered clear or complex?
- Do norm entrepreneurs and other stakeholders agree on the definitions and scope of the norm proposition?

3.2.3. Framing

This factor concerns a norm proposition’s relation to other established norms and issue areas. It often determines the perceived legitimacy of the prepared norm and conditions feasible venues, measures and solutions. While connected to the clarity of the norm discussed above, it is important to recognize that norms must thus be articulated and conceptualized in ways that allow for linkages and associations with other, often more legitimate, norms and issues. These connections often happen through what the literature calls “framing”,

An example of a study that supports this argument is Panke and Petersohn (2011) on norm degeneration. This study shows that precise norms tend to have a swifter abolishment, as opposed to incremental degeneration.
and such exercises, when they are done with some degree of intentionality, can be described as “strategic framing” (Rhinard 2010), in this case by norm entrepreneurs. Rost Rublee (2009) similarly refers to this mechanism as “linking” and suggests that linking is an agency-based process of connecting the values of the norm proposition to the values held by those who are the target of the influence.

A number of case studies have explored and tested the importance of a norm proposition’s association with existing norms and issues. In general, the findings of these studies demonstrate that new norms must be rhetorically connected to broader norms. Blok (2008), for instance, shows how anti-whaling activists in Japan have tried to undermine the pro-whaling norm by connecting the issue to widely established values, such as the immorality of killing, while pro-whaling advocates have emphasized the values of scientific rationality and national sovereignty. Youde’s (2008) study on universal access to primary health care and antiretroviral drugs, he shows how the latter issue has been successfully embraced by the international community. Advocates framed the issue of primary health care first as a collective public good and later as a fundamental human right. This rebranding of the issue shows, according to Youde, that it matters who the advocates of an issue are, and that the role of advocates in international politics is becoming increasingly important. It also shows that the promoted norm needs to “resonate” with dominant norms at a specific moment in time. In Collins’ (2013) research on ASEAN’s adoption of global HIV/AIDS norms, he finds that the norm propositions were adjusted throughout the process to make it easier for them to be adopted. In addition, Collins interestingly shows how some norms were promoted in ways that mediated perceptions of failure in the event they were not accomplished.

Similar arguments on norm “fit” are put forth by Florini (1996), Otendörfer (2013), Bailey (2008), Elgström (2000) and Knight (2011). Previous research on norms thus suggests that the path a norm takes during the emergence stage is greatly affected by its relation to existing norms and values. This relation can be oppositional and become conflictual, or compatible with existing norms, which is a sign of good normative fit.

A tangible aspect of framing concerns a norm proposition’s legitimacy, morality and appeal to universal values, that is, the more fundamental “goodness” of the norm. Intuition suggests that norms that fulfill these requirements are more likely to be accepted and adopted, and this is supported by research on norms (see for example Keck and Sikkink 1998; Reich 2010). In practice, however, it is no easy task to measure what is perceived as good and legitimate, but norm-focused studies offer some hints. For instance, norm proposi-

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18 This paragraph is drawn from a similar paragraph in Jakobsson (2018:56), a text also produced within the scope of this PhD, and has been reused here with the permission of the publisher.
tions that are framed in a way that humanizes “the other” or that make universalistic claims (meaning that the norm proposition is expected to have the same validity everywhere or to be in “everyone’s interest”) are more likely to be influential (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). As Keck & Sikkink (1998) suggest, it can also be that a norm proposition targets vulnerable groups or that it sets out to save people from bodily harm.

It has already been discussed that norm entrepreneurs have great influence on the way in which a norm proposition is framed. However, since linking exercises involve relating the proposition to the existing political and normative landscape, already prevailing, powerful and structurally embedded norms set standards for new norms and determine their variation in terms of legitimacy or sensitivity. The extent to which actors have an opportunity to strategically frame the norm proposition, therefore, is structurally conditioned by powerful stakeholders, powerful norms and existing resources.

Empirical signs of the connections between the norm proposition and established norms and issue-areas can be found in actors’ statements and descriptions of the kind of issue the norm proposition is, which other norms are discussed in the same context as the proposed norm and whether actors are trying to promote or defend a proposition by stressing its connection to other norms. The variance in framing thus lies in the popularity or sensitivity of the type of issue the norm proposition is categorized as or the more established norms to which it is connected. The framing can thus vary from unpopular to popular and from not sensitive to sensitive. The framing also has implications for the types of venue that can handle the proposition (Princen 2011). For instance, a norm proposition must be linked to climate change for it to be included in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) discussions or linked to health in order to fall under the mandate of the World Health Organization (WHO). Similarly, the framing has implications for which measures and solutions are possible as well as the level of resistance the proposition will encounter, meaning that the more contentious and sensitive the framing, the more impediments there will be to norm acceptance.

Against this background, a number of questions can be derived which allows for the data on each case to be assessed on this point:

- To what other established norms or policy sectors has the norm proposition been connected?
- How is the norm articulated in public speech, in formal documents and by protagonists in interviews? What justifications, and accompanying imagery, metaphors and concepts, are used to explain the “rightness” of the issue?
3.2.4. Venue

Another factor neglected in much of the literature concerns the importance of an institutional platform or venue for sustained discussion and negotiation of an emerging norm. Coleman (2011) is one of the few scholars to show that when a norm is born and has gained attention, it also needs a venue or an institutional “home” in order to make progress towards success. This factor is aligned with studies in International Relations related to the importance of institutionalization. For instance, Koremenos, Lipson and Snidal (2001) present a rational account of institutional design determinants and define institutions as “explicit arrangements, negotiated among international actors, that prescribe, proscribe, and/or authorize behavior” (p. 762). When these arrangements become embedded and widely accepted, they are said to have been institutionalized as legitimate rules and procedures (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Goldstein and Keohane 1993). However, the public administration literature treats institutions and institutionalization in a way closer to the intent of this study, as widely accepted locations for interaction to further a common purpose (Hague and Harrop 2004; Selznick 1996). This is akin to the concept of “venue” which is a precise definition of “the institutional locations where authoritative decisions are made concerning a given issue” (Baumgartner and Jones 2010:32).

Using “venue” rather than “institutionalization” offers the additional advantage of avoiding confusion with the dependent variable used in this thesis (norm acceptance). In other words, the purpose of this factor is to assess whether there is institutional capacity to discuss, negotiate and disseminate a norm proposition—it is not to measure the degree of legislation.

The argument employed here thus aligns more closely with Coleman (2011) who argues that the norm literature is generally ignorant of the importance of a proper venue for a norm proposition, and who uses the cases of the ban on antipersonnel landmines and humanitarian intervention to illustrate the effects. A venue, according to Coleman, can be “the institutional setting in which an official diplomatic encounter occurs, which can include international conferences and summits, meetings of standing bodies of intergovernmental organizations, and independent commissions” (p. 167). She shows that the effect of venues on emerging norms comes primarily through the specific characteristics of the venue (venue membership, mandate, output status, rules of procedure/operating procedures and legitimacy) as these components, through venue-situated negotiations on the scope and content of the norm proposition, affect both the substance of the norm and the level of international support (Coleman 2011).

The relevance of an institutional home is further emphasized in, for example, De Franco, Meyer and Smith (2015) and Garcia (2010). Garcia (2010) has studied the emergence of a climate change norm in the international system. The author finds that one of the most central determinants of the emergence
process was the rise of a climate change regime (for example the UNFCCC) and thus an institutional home. De Franco, Meyer and Smith (2015) takes a look at the (failed) implementation of the “responsibility to protect” (R2P) norm in the EU. The authors conclude that the lack of “goodness of fit” and clarity of the norm were important factors, but argue that poor bureaucratic receptivity was the greatest obstacle and the most important explanation for failure.

The importance of the venue includes the conditions and structure for negotiations. Gest et al. (2013) suggest that long and unstructured negotiations where delegates frequently change is a hindrance to successful negotiations and thus norm take-up. They argue that negotiation partners are less likely to be supportive of a new norm if a similar norm has already been discussed and perhaps even been formalized. Therefore, it can be assumed that structured negotiations with consistency of delegates as well as the originality of the norm proposition are factors that would enhance chances of success.

Whether a certain venue is the “right” venue for a norm proposition is difficult to assess. It can be assumed, however, that if the implications of a new norm cross many different policy areas, the norm is likely to fall between the cracks of different venues – with the result that no venue properly adopts it and there is thus no platform for its further formalization or acceptance. Empirical signs of this can be that no institution or venue adopts the norm, that different institutions try to defer responsibilities to others or that the norm proposition shifts amongst agendas of different venues.

This thesis understands the factor of venue as both the institutional home (that is, the agency, commission and/or secretariat which has the norm proposition in its portfolio) and the platform for discussion (which can be a series of summits or meetings partly or fully devoted to the proposition). The venue can be new, specifically constructed for the norm proposition in question, or already established but with a scope that to at least some degree covers the proposition. Among the specific characteristics of a venue – as it is understood here – are that it has some degree of authority, that it encompasses repetitive interaction such as regular summits or meetings, that it constitutes a formalized discussion setting and has the potential for some type of rule-making and that it contains some degree of bureaucratic capacity, such as a secretariat). Ideally, the venue would also have a mandate to address the norm proposition.

A norm proposition’s take-up in a venue is an important step in its emergence and interacts with several of the other factors: especially the work of the entrepreneurs, the norm itself and framing. How norm entrepreneurs can work strategically to frame a new norm proposition has already been discussed. Part of this strategic framing targets the possible venues in which the proposition could be adopted. Coleman (2011) suggests that norm promoters attempt to make a strategic choice of venue depending on where the new norm is most likely to be adopted. The procedure involves: “the identification of
venue options whose likely outcomes are sufficiently superior to the normative status quo to be worth their attendant costs. In principle, norm leaders can select any international body of which they are members, seek to modify an existing venue or create a new one” (Coleman 2011:171). This notion is closely aligned with the idea of “venue-shopping” (also known as “forum-shopping”), which is often used in the agenda-setting literature. As in Coleman’s suggestion above, venue-shopping is where agenda-setters make attempts to have their specific policy issue included in the venue in which they expect it to be most easily pursued and where they are most likely to achieve an outcome that supports their interests (Alter and Meunier 2009; Princen 2011). The venue also constitutes one of the most important settings within which the content of the norm itself is clarified. Coleman (2011) argues that both the success and the content of a norm during the emergence stage of the norm life cycle are determined by which venue the norm is handled in as well as the conditions and structures of that venue.

Venue conditions can vary from non-existent (meaning that no institutional agency, or official within an agency includes it as part of its portfolio) or low (meaning that there is an institutional concern but no clear mandate and no separate venue for discussions on the proposition) to high (meaning that there is an agency with a mandate to work on the norm proposition, a dedicated secretariat and a dedicated series of meetings). Leaning on the research described above, it is assumed here that the higher the fulfillment of venue conditions, the higher the likelihood of norm acceptance.

Against this background, a number of questions can be derived which allows for the material on each case to be assessed on this point:

- To what extent is there a setting for discussions on the progress of the norm? Does this setting allow for a focused discussion on the issue underpinned by the norm in question?
- Is there a permanent or semi-permanent set of officials at the international level, for instance, in the form of an international secretariat, with bureaucratic capacities regarding this issue?
- Is there a regular process that allows for ongoing dialogue or discussion of the issue, in effect keeping the issue alive and on the agenda?

3.2.5. Resistance

Norms are not created in a vacuum. Nor do they develop within one. It is therefore natural for a norm to be debated and reformulated throughout its emergence process. It can also be assumed that the more fundamental the change is that the norm proposition suggests, the more it might be expected to be debated prior to acceptance. Part of the literature on norms is devoted to investigating norm contestation. It argues that this is a necessary and beneficial aspect of moving a norm proposition towards adoption (see above). How-
ever, taken to an extreme, contestation of a norm becomes an impediment rather than a constructive process. This may be when the contestation continues for too long or when it is the essence of the norm that is being debated, meaning whether it is even desirable. The greater the degree of polarization and conflict in the discussion, the less likely it is that the norm proposition will be accepted.

Once the norm proposition has attracted attention, and entered an international policy venue, whole new sets of interests and opinions enter the discussion, as more stakeholders take part in the process. This can spur a new wave of contestation or conflict as this is where politics and political interests truly become part of the norm discussion. Symons & Altman (2015) argue that international norm polarization is a powerful force. Some polarization efforts are intentionally pursued – the actions behind the related discussion of “norm revisionists” (McKeown 2009), “norm opponents” (Krook and True 2012) and “norm antipreneurs” (Bloomfield and Scott 2017b). Although these can be countered, the main point is that an excess of contestation and polarization impedes norm adoption. Rost Rublee (2009) reminds us that conflict within or between advocacy groups and stakeholders can create polarization and is not favorable for norm adoption.

One reasonable question to consider, however, is whether it is justifiable to treat resistance as a factor on its own rather than as a part of agency. Indeed, resistance could be considered as “the other side of the coin” of entrepreneurship, as those who oppose rather than promote a new norm (Bloomfield and Scott 2017b). However, there are several reasons why agency and resistance should be kept analytically separate. First, this thesis treats entrepreneurship and resistance as parallel or intertwined forces, not merely different end-points on an agency variation spectrum. While entrepreneurship and resistance are in many ways counteractive forces, they are not entirely mutually exclusive. Strong and successful entrepreneurship does not necessarily mean that there will be low resistance, and strong resistance does not necessarily indicate weak entrepreneurship. On the contrary, it can reasonably be assumed that sensitive and/or fundamental norm change includes both strong advocacy and strong opposition. Second, agents of resistance are more than just entrepreneurs behind opposing norm propositions. They are specifically opposing the suggested norm and often advocate the status quo. Norm “antipreneurs” can sometimes be attributed specific tactics, strategies, functions or logics, which are distinctive to their role (Bloomfield and Scott 2017a; Scott and Bloomfield 2017). Third, as Bloomfield and Scott (2017a) have pointed out, the existing literature on norm dynamics has not given enough attention to the role of resistance to norm change (or the lack of it). All these aspects justify why it is reasonable to treat resistance as a component on its own when trying to understand the forces of norm evolution.
Resistance can take various forms – from neglect and passivity, to outspoken opposition. The mildest form is indeed passivity, neglect or de-prioritization. For instance, actors might rhetorically support a new norm proposition but be reluctant to take action to practically support it (Scott and Bloomfield 2017). Another example of active neglect from the policy literature is so-called agenda exclusion. Tallberg (2003) suggest this concept in his study on the agenda-setting powers of the EU Council Presidency. He argues that agenda exclusion can be exercised in at least three different observable ways. An actor in power may: (a) “remain silent on a subject that is considered a problem by others and potentially could have been placed on the broader policy agenda”; (b) “exploit its procedural control to exclude items from the decision agenda”, for instance by refusing to pick up a dossier and thus stall progress; or (c) “postpone decisions on subjects it dislikes by deliberately presenting impossible compromise proposals” (Tallberg, 2003:12f). Moreover, Bachrach & Baratz (1963) discussed the concept of nondecision-making. The core of this argument is that power is exercised not only in making decisions or actively choosing to decide against a proposition, but also in preventing new issues from being put on the political agenda – or not even considering them.

Scott and Bloomfield (2017) considers the typical antipreneur to be an actor defending the status quo, rather than preventing norm change (although the authors also suggest other antipreneur types). Harvey and Mitton (2017) argues that antipreneurs of this kind are more likely to be successful, simply because the status quo aligns with existing norms and actors are generally more prone to be path dependent. Opponents can also take the form of “rival entrepreneurs” where the resistance consists of promoting other, competing norms (Scott and Bloomfield 2017).

Operationally speaking, the presence of conflict and resistance can be detected when stakeholders express different opinions about the raison d’être of the norm, when the focus of discussions revolves around disputes and has done so for a long time, when a significant proportion of reports and articles are written in ways that undermine other actors’ arguments or advocate specific points in favor of a particular norm, when opposing actors attempt to “counter-frame” (Adachi 2017; Scott and Bloomfield 2017) the norm proposition in order to make it less legitimate or when proposals for action are ignored or repeatedly postponed. The types of actor that practice resistance can be different across different cases, and they employ different techniques depending on the context.

In relation to the other factors in the framework, this discussion makes clear that the factor of resistance interacts with them in various ways. Resistance is expected to become more apparent when the norm proposition has been taken up in a venue and thus in a more formal and political discussion setting – simply because the proposition becomes more widely known and there is more
at stake by that stage. As is mentioned above, resistance is always to be understood in relation to entrepreneurship but it can be parallel, passive or a rival. The polarization that resistance often brings to the norm emergence process can impact the content as well as the framing of the norm, for example through attempts at counter-framing (see above). In sum, resistance may vary from no resistance to lack of support to subtle resistance to outspoken resistance. Moreover, a low level of resistance can be expected to prolong the norm acceptance process, while a high level of resistance might be expected to substantially prolong or prevent norm acceptance.

Against this background, a number of questions can be derived that allows for the material to be assessed on this point:

- Do key actors in a norm evolution process exhibit different views about the “oughtness” of a norm? Do central texts on an issue underpinned by norms reflect contrary views about the norm?
- Have actors with opposing views – explicitly or implicitly - attempted to counteract the activities of norm entrepreneurs, undermine the desirability of the norm proposition or promote a conflicting norm proposition? What role have such actors played, and in which organizations?
- Have policy stakeholders – explicitly or implicitly – demonstrated an unwillingness to embrace the proposed norm?

3.2.6. Accounting for contingencies

While the factors set out above constitute different conditions for change, this final part of the framework constitutes another analytical component that can be critical to understanding norm acceptance but it is often neglected. This variable encompasses how contingent contextual factors are interlinked with the norm emergence process as well as how these factors do or do not lead to change.

As argued above, contingencies have been considered in different ways by the policy analysis field, but have thus far not been seriously incorporated into explanatory models of norm evolution. In public policy and agenda setting research, change is often attributed to factors that cannot be easily predicted, such as a series of events or fortuitous situations that open up opportunities for change previously thought improbable or even impossible. Such moments allow one to consider factors in the broader societal and political context in which norm evolution takes place. There are theoretical models in the policy-related literature concerned with contingencies or with which contingencies are core components, from which this thesis finds inspiration. Examples include works that illuminate and disentangle the importance of “focusing events” (Birkland 1997), “punctuations” (Baumgartner and Jones 2002), “critical junctures” (Collier and Collier 1991), “windows of opportunity”
(Kingdon 1995) and “external perturbations” (Sabatier 1998). What these approaches all have in common, and what is largely neglected in the international norm literature, is the importance of unforeseen events (such as natural disasters, an unexpected election result or a terrorist attack) or developments (such as a new technological discovery or a novel research result) in making an outcome more likely. Since norm evolution at the international level can be compared to a public policy process, the scholarly literature on agenda setting is of great assistance here. Contingent components have been shown to have a determining impact on the public policy process, so it is not far-fetched to assume that contingencies would account for a significant proportion of norm change explanations.

This thesis understands contingencies as more or less dramatic events that have the potential to intervene in the norm emergence process. If the contingency is linked to the norm proposition and thus intervenes in the process, it may trigger a “window of opportunity” that has the potential to advance norm acceptance if it is combined with favorable conditions in the other factors of the framework. This section provides the background to this understanding of contingencies and further discussion on how contingencies may be expected to influence norm acceptance.

Norms, like many other policy-related processes, tend to be somewhat path dependent, and easily accepted norms are often consistent with past behavior (Rost Rublee 2009). It thus seems reasonable to assume that the intervention power of contingencies contains key explanations as to why some new norms become accepted and others do not, and why and how norm change occurs. Given the logic of path dependence, one assumption could be that contingencies are more important for norm propositions that demand more fundamental change. At the same time, given that all norm entrepreneurs necessarily have to compete for policymakers’ attention, it is also reasonable to believe that highly legitimate norm propositions or propositions which do not require substantial change would require a boost in salience and a certain degree of fortunate timing in order to be realized.

Inspired by previous understandings of contingencies, windows of opportunity and critical junctures (represented by, for instance, Capoccia and Kelemen 2007; Collier and Collier 1991; Kingdon 1995 and Schedler 2007), this thesis conceptualizes this variable in the following way. First, in analytical terms, contingencies and the resulting opportunities for potential change interact with all the other factors in the framework of this thesis to produce a certain outcome. They should be understood not as an isolated factor alongside the others mentioned above, but as an additional analytical layer of mechanisms. Second, the use of contingency here consists of three parts: a “focusing event” or external shock, the period of potential change that this event triggers and the joint effect of the confluence of beneficial factors at a certain point in time. The first part is specific, “random” events that affect the salience
of a norm proposition. Such events can take different forms but the most notable are focusing events and external shocks, which are sudden, more or less unexpected and often dramatic (see for example Birkland 1997). But they can also be less dramatic, and come, for instance, in the form of new research and knowledge (see for example Kingdon 1995; Rosert et al. 2013). The second part, which relates to the analytical component of contingencies, is the moment of openness to change that the contingency may trigger, that is, a window of opportunity of some kind. The third part is the combined effect that takes place when several other factors – in this case specifically related to the norm proposition – combine in ways that propel a certain outcome. In contrast to some research, therefore, this approach sees specific issues such as “salience” (Bélanger and Meguid 2008; Wlezien 2005) and “political attention” (Jones and Baumgartner 2005) as important but secondary to the critical nature of how other factors interact.

In sum, this thesis understands the dynamics of contingencies in relation to norm emergence in the following way. More or less dramatic contingencies trigger a limited period of potential change (that is, a window of opportunity of some kind). This period is more likely to be productive (that is, lead to change) if other conditions – in this case specifically related to norm emergence – have reached a certain maturity and are favorable at approximately the same time.

The remaining discussion in this section goes through the different aspects of this analytical dimension. A general discussion on contingencies and different kinds of shocks and focusing events is followed by an account of policy-related theorizations of periods of potential change – windows of opportunity in particular, but also critical junctures. The discussion in the first part of this section relies heavily on previous research on these components, and takes inspiration from these writers. The final part of the section specifies how this thesis will use and understand contingencies and windows of opportunity, and the expectations raised of the overall theoretical framework.

Contingencies

It is difficult to arrive at an all-encompassing but analytically precise definition of contingencies, and many writers refrain from attempting a distinct conceptualization, not least because the concept of contingency “carries different meanings in different contexts of usage; the claims we make and the commitments we accept when we talk about it (in the study of politics or elsewhere) depend on the empirical phenomena we are talking about” (Schedler 2007:58). Nonetheless, some attributes are common across different understandings and usages of contingencies. Shapiro and Bedi (2007) note that studying political contingencies is about studying the unexpected, the accidental and the unforeseen. Schedler (2007) identifies indeterminacy, uncertainty and conditionality as three key elements that are all common to contingencies. By definition, contingencies have an inherent characteristic of randomness in relation to the
norm proposition, which makes them a difficult component to predict and challenging to theorize. What seems certain, however, is that contingencies of some type will arise at certain points in time. Norm entrepreneurs and other stakeholders are thus right to prepare for and be attentive in order to recognize moments of potential change when they present themselves (as argued by, for instance, Kingdon 1995).

Circumstances in the context surrounding norm evolution can increase or decrease the prominence of any norm, and proposed norms in particular, and affect the likelihood of its broader acceptance. Contingencies account for significant disjunctures in social or political life: migration flows, a war, a natural disaster or the death of a key figure such as a politician for example. Such events can not only shift attention to other issues, consuming political capital, but also prompt new thinking about which norms may be appropriate to consider. Technology and innovation can also both create the need for new norms or make the advancement of a previously stalled norm possible (see for example Müller & Wunderlich, 2013). Shocks of different kinds do not in themselves lead to norm acceptance but – it is assumed here – they do constitute triggering mechanisms of more complex phenomena – such as windows of opportunity or critical junctures, which are discussed below – that have the potential to produce change.

A number of public policy writers have discussed the impact of such shocks and how they function as triggers of change. For instance, Birkland (1997, 2006) has carried out seminal research on the impact of disasters on policy, focusing on events such as terrorist attacks, earthquakes and hurricanes, aviation disasters, nuclear power plant incidents and oil spills. Birkland suggests that potentially focusing events are events that happen suddenly, affect a large number of people, and are relatively rare, and that the public and the policy community learn about at more or less at the same time. Whether a potentially focusing event becomes an actual focusing event depends on how the media reports the event, the institutional capacities to address it and whether pro-change forces are able to mobilize (Birkland 1997).

John (2012:81) uses the 2008 financial crisis as an example of how external shocks can play out in relation to public policy. He shows that at times of major shocks to the system, policymakers react not only according to their own agendas but also in response to – sometimes indirect – feedback loops from elites, interest groups, the media or public opinion, suggesting that one reason for action by policy makers is that they want to act in ways they believe are expected of them. In another study on multisectoral policy disruptions and policy change after the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, May, Sapotichne, and Workman (2009) point out that while it is relatively easy to attract policymakers’ attention after a disruptive event, attention in itself is insufficient for policy change. The authors suggest that in addition to policymakers’ attention, the policy subsystems concerned must have a certain level
of volatility within and across them for policymaking to be susceptible to disruptive events. This would include a capacity to deal with uncertainties and/or to be able to incorporate the disruption into the system’s “existing ways of doing business” (p. 177).

A characteristic feature of external shocks and focusing events is thus that they have the potential to significantly increase the political and public salience of a norm proposition, and thus often constitute a key trigger of a subsequent period of potential change. They can do so to different extents and sometimes so heavily that it appears as if an increase in salience is the only direct effect causing norm change. This thesis argues, however, that such an event must be timed and combined with other favorable conditions. Such conditions can be variations in the other factors suggested in this framework, in political programs or preparations, or in the maturity of the norm emergence process. Examples of such approaches are examined in turn below.

The moment of potential change
A well-known account of the effect of contingencies is Kingdon’s (1984, 1995) conceptual framework on multiple streams and windows of opportunity. The windows of opportunity approach shows how certain factors must coincide in order for a public policy issue that has entered the policy agenda, to proceed towards political decision making. In doing so, Kingdon offers an explanation for why some norm propositions fail to be accepted even when individual factors that were expected to be influential have been favorable. Moreover, the windows of opportunity approach emphasizes how proponents (in this case norm entrepreneurs) are crucial during open “windows”, as it is primarily up to them to seize the opportunity to advance the proposition before the window closes.

In Kingdon’s view, windows of opportunity appear where problems, policies and politics (the three “streams”) come together to create joint effects that are beneficial to successful policy making. The problem stream relates to the problem itself, its characteristics and especially its context; for example, whether a crisis increases the salience of an issue. The policy stream contains ideas about possible solutions and can be affected by new or accumulated knowledge or technology appropriated by specialists or policy stakeholders. The political stream is represented by the conditions within political institutions, such as electoral results, public opinion or institutional frames. Kingdon argues that isolated circumstances are not enough. It is rather the joint effects that are powerful and can improve an issue’s status on the political agenda.

The main insights of this approach suggest that these processes interact to affect an issue’s status in the agenda queue. The public policy agenda is here seen as a queue of issues and, depending on different agenda-setting processes, issues can be added to, moved up or down, or disappear from the queue. When the different streams become supportive of a certain issue at the same time, a “policy window” opens. A policy window is thus the chance for
a certain issue to be introduced onto the agenda, moved up the agenda queue or a subject for political decision making. It is crucial that entrepreneurs seize this opportunity to push the issue they are advocating before the window closes (Kingdon 1995; Zahariadis 2007).

A specific contribution of Kingdon’s approach to windows of opportunity is the conditions under which windows close before acceptance or substantive advancement has been achieved. Kingdon argues that a policy window can close easily and quickly, and remain closed for a very long time. Kingdon outlines a range of possible reasons why windows close, of which a few are of particular interest when relating window-like moments to norm advancement. For instance, Kingdon suggests that a new issue (a norm proposition in this study) can be overloaded with additional problems and requirements during the window. Kingdon also argues that if external events bring attention to a new issue, these events may pass and new events concerning other issues may steal the spotlight – the “pressingness” of the issue disappears. Other relevant reasons might be that participants – due to a lack of public interest or political will – see no future for the proposition and eventually lose interest, or that there is no available policy alternative to resolve the issue. This final suggestion is called “coupling”, where the propositions is matched with available and existing policy instruments and alternatives. According to Kingdon, coupling is essential to a productive window (Kingdon 1995). These suggested reasons for a window closing are not just reasons why moments of heightened contingency, fluidity and potential for change might not be productive. They also provide hints on the conditions that need to be present for change – rather than re-equilibrium – to occur.

Another way to understand the impact of external and unexpected events is the notion of critical junctures, which typically refers to a certain point in time in a political process where the room for maneuver is larger than usual, where a broader range of actors have an opportunity to influence the process and where decisions made have a particularly large influence on future developments, often for a long time. Capoccia and Kelemen (2007:348) write that “in the context of the study of path-dependent phenomena, we define critical junctures as relatively short periods of time during which there is a substantially heightened probability that agents’ choices will affect the outcome of interest”. According to Acemoglu and Robinson (2012), a critical juncture can be understood as either a major event or a confluence of factors. Capoccia (2016) describes critical junctures as “moment of openness for radical institutional change” (p. 98).

The concept of a critical juncture was introduced decades ago by, for instance, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) in their work on party systems and voter alignment. The concept’s breakthrough in institutional analysis, however, came in 1991 with Collier and Collier’s seminal work on the labor movement and regime dynamics in Latin America. They defined a critical juncture as “a
period of significant change, which typically occurs in distinct ways in different countries (or in other units of analysis) and which is hypothesized to produce distinct legacies” (Collier and Collier 1991:29). The authors argue that it follows from this definition that such a period must have a traceable and distinct legacy – otherwise it is not a critical juncture. Moreover, a critical juncture relates to other elements, especially those relating to the “base line” process. For instance, the impact of the critical juncture is both a result of and a deviation from previous developments – that is, the antecedent conditions. Furthermore, a critical juncture is normally triggered by what Collier and Collier call a “cleavage” or a crisis. The idea that such a period of significant change can leave a legacy reflected in certain values and procedures over a long period of time (and the idea that “critical juncture” is required for developments to deviate from the base line) corresponds with theoretical approaches on path dependency and historical institutionalism (Barnett and Finnemore 1999; Pierson 2014). The actual outcome (level of “criticalness”) of a critical juncture can, according to Capoccia and Kelemen (2007), be measured by the “jump” in probability that the juncture infuses into the outcome of interest as well as by the “temporal leverage”, which represents the “duration of the impact of the critical juncture relative to the duration of the juncture itself” (p. 361).

Not everyone regards substantial change as a necessary attribute of a critical juncture. Capoccia and Kelemen (2007), for instance, argue that given the understanding of a critical juncture as a state in which change is plausible, possible and seriously considered, change can also be rejected in order to return to a status quo, and “there is no reason to discard these cases as ‘non-critical’ junctures” (p. 352). In addition, Capoccia and Kelemen argue that disregarding negative cases (in terms of change) and so-called near-misses would cause the analyst to miss out on valuable information about how critical junctures work. The understanding in this thesis is aligned with Capoccia and Kelemen (2007) – rather than Collier and Collier (1991) – in the way that moments of potential change (critical junctures or windows of opportunity) can result in re-equilibrium (i.e. a negative case of change) but still be considered a window or juncture.

Returning to the question of operationalization, this thesis strives for an operationalization of contingencies as an analytical tool that is relevant and applicable to politics in the international community. Window of opportunity is chosen as the concept to represent the moment of potential change triggered by contingencies even though the operationalization of this phenomenon is inspired by a range of works on the subject and thus aligns not only with Kingdon’s account of windows of opportunity, but also with critical junctures and others.

So how are a window of opportunity and similar confluences of events to be recognized and assessed in relation to a norm proposition’s evolution? In this thesis, such a period of potential significant change commences with an
intervening variable that consists of a (more or less) unforeseen event (a shock, crisis or other focusing event or new technology and knowledge) that gives the norm proposition a (small or large) boost in salience. The contingent event triggers a longer or shorter moment of potential change, characterized by fluidity (in actors, salience and institutional frames) and by several simultaneously favorable conditions. The contingent dimension of this framework is thus concerned with the dynamic influence of contingencies on norm emergence and acceptance. Theories on confluences of events (such as windows of opportunity and, to some extent, critical junctures – are ways to show and explain how and why contingencies have the potential to trigger change. It is argued here that this latter part of the understanding of contingencies, that of joint effects, is essential, and is also where this new framework makes the most important contribution to the contemporary literature on norm dynamics. It should be noted here that all norm propositions are expected to encounter some types of contingency during their emergence (although dramatic contingencies can result in dramatic increases in salience), and how actors react to contingencies might be of critical importance for the latter’s influence on the norm acceptance process. The key is to understand how contingencies interact with the components of norm evolution and are able – or unable – to make the proposition propel.19

A window of opportunity can be recognized empirically through careful tracing of the process and a multidimensional understanding of the norm development. Focusing events of different kinds can be indicators of windows but they can also be recognized by more subtle, complex, phases of norm negotiation where there is a heightened openness to change and actors have the opportunity to choose paths that will lead to distinct legacies.

Focusing specifically on how windows of opportunity and similar approaches can be applied to understanding and explaining norm change, the expectation distilled from the discussion is that contingencies are a determinant of the outcome in terms of norm acceptance in the international community. For change, or a leap forward in norm acceptance, to occur, however, the window triggered by the contingency/contingencies needs to favorably coincide with certain beneficial conditions in the factors relating to the norm proposition’s emergence. In this framework, the momentum of contingencies and windows of opportunity is expected to interact with the variations and conditions presented by the previous five factors, in at least five important ways.

As Birkland (1997:1) points out, policy change can indeed also come about from long-term trends or the tireless work of certain actors. This thesis argues, however, that contingencies are relevant also in understanding this type of slow-onset change, even though determining points in the developments are much more difficult to identify. That said, another expectation regarding this analytic dimension is that a window of opportunity relies on certain antecedent conditions (just as a critical juncture does) and often requires long-term preparation but that (more or less dramatic) contingencies are the triggers of windows and junctures and are thus important for progress on norm acceptance (Collier and Collier 1991; Kingdon 1995).
First, norm entrepreneurs are crucial as they are expected to recognize and take advantage of contingencies in order to trigger a window of opportunity, and to take advantage of the unusual state of fluidity and openness to change that the window presents (Kingdon 2011; Wunderlich 2013). For norm entrepreneurs to do this effectively, however, it helps if they are already an established and coordinated group with clear objectives and access to policymakers. Second, it is beneficial if the norm proposition itself has reached a certain level of maturity, meaning that it has been clarified, well-defined and suitably framed in order for it to be easily connected to the contingency and window, and to narrow down any available alternatives and possible solutions. Third, theories on critical junctures tell us that periods of potential change often entail a fluidity in institutional arrangements, which means that the level of institutionalization can increase during a window of opportunity, or that the norm proposition can find a new venue or become more highly prioritized in an established venue. On the other hand, if the norm proposition has already been incorporated into a suitable venue, this should speed up the process and further increase the probability of a productive outcome from a window of opportunity. In other words, the more dedicated the venue is to handling the specific norm proposition, the more effective outcomes the window can produce.

Fourth, resistance can be either increased or decreased during a window. In addition, norm propositions that were uncontroversial or not polarizing previously can encounter strong resistance as the salience of a proposition increases. However, heightened salience also has the potential to clarify the purpose and benefits of acting on a norm proposition and thus the potential to shift the attitudes of previous doubters or opponents. While resistance can obstruct the effects of windows, it is more likely that windows will diminish resistance. One reason for this assumption is that most actors involved in a norm’s evolution are neither outspoken entrepreneurs nor fierce antipreneurs. They are the large passive group that does not have a very strong opinion regarding the norm proposition or does not know much about it. For this group – which is essential for norm acceptance – a boost in salience and a window of opportunity can “activate” sentiments and overcome resistance.

Fifth, previous research has suggested that a moment of openness to change can end without progress if there are no available alternatives or solutions for policymakers and other stakeholders to turn to in order to formalize acceptance of the norm proposition. This suggests that a window of opportunity is more inclined to lead to change if there are feasible alternatives at hand. Such possible solutions depend on two factors in the framework: either the norm entrepreneurs can develop and prepare proposals that can be brought forth during the period of fluidity and openness; or, if the norm proposition has already been adopted by a venue, it is possible that viable alternatives will already be available within these institutional frames. Thus, in addition to the fact that a window must be seized by advocates, if the content of the norm
proposition has been clarified enough, if it is framed in a politically and publicly desirable way, and if it has found an institutional home, the window is more likely to convince the “passive mass” and/or ameliorate resistance, and lead to an outcome of norm acceptance in the international community.

In sum, this thesis understands and operationalizes contingencies and windows of opportunity in the following way. First, if linked to the norm proposition, contingencies can trigger windows of opportunity. Second, windows of opportunity, if timely and seized, substantially heighten the likelihood of norm acceptance. Third, windows of opportunity can vary in terms of: (a) the level of salience given to the norm proposition; (b) fluidity and leeway for action; and (c) the number of components that are combined at a certain point in time. It thus follows that the higher the “score” on 3 a–c, the higher the likelihood that the window will result in norm acceptance.

Combining the expectations for contingencies and the timing of windows of opportunity, the following questions can be used to assess the occurrence and influence of these components in the case studies:

- Have contingencies in the form of, for instance, crises, disasters, significant political changes or clear advancements in technology or knowledge intervened in the norm emergence process?
- Have there been moments of heightened fluidity and openness during the norm emergence process?
- Did norm entrepreneurs recognize the window at the time? If so, how did they take advantage of it?
- How was the window timed in relation to the norm emergence process and what was the status of the other factors at the time?
- Did the window lead to a leap forward in norm acceptance?

* * *

At this point, all the components of the framework have been described and discussed in depth. In addition to conceptualizing each factor, this chapter has suggested ways to identify and assess the various components and mechanisms of greatest importance and most interest in explaining norm acceptance. Moreover, it has discussed how the different parts are set in motion when they dynamically interrelate with each other. Taken together, the framework constructed above constitutes the tools with which the central research questions of this thesis will be answered: whether it is plausible that contingencies and windows of opportunity provide added value and an explanatory power in understanding the outcomes of norm acceptance. All the questions specified in the framework, which are used to apply the framework to the case material, are summarized in Table 4. Chapter 4 goes into greater detail on how the study was conducted and the methodological considerations. Chapters 5 and 6 use the framework and probe its plausibility on two empirical cases: disaster risk reduction and then climate-induced migration.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Factor</th>
<th>Questions</th>
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| Agency      | - What are the key actors in initiating the norm proposition and making the norm claims, persuading stakeholders, maintaining interest and, where possible, exploiting windows of opportunity?  
  - Are these actors well-respected and well-coordinated with access to policy makers?  
  - In what ways have they pursued their objectives of promoting the norm proposition?  
  - In what ways has agency interacted with other components and dimensions of this analytical framework? |
| The norm itself | - Are the definition, content and causal pathways of the norm proposition considered clear or complex?  
  - Do norm entrepreneurs and other stakeholders agree on the definition and scope of the norm proposition? |
| Framing     | - To what other established norms or policy sectors has the norm proposition been connected?  
  - How is the norm articulated in public speech, formal documents and by protagonists in interviews? What justifications and accompanying imagery, metaphors and concepts are used when explaining the “rightness” of an issue? |
| Venue       | - To what extent is there a setting for discussions on the progress of the norm? Does this setting allow for a focused discussion on the issue underpinned by the norm in question?  
  - Is there a permanent or semi-permanent set of officials at the international level, for instance, in the form of an international secretariat, with bureaucratic capacities regarding this issue?  
  - Is there a regular process that allows for ongoing dialogue or discussion of the issue, in effect keeping the issue alive and on the agenda? |
| Resistance  | - Do key actors in the norm evolution process exhibit different views about the “oughtness” of the norm? Do central texts regarding an issue underpinned by norms reflect contrary views about the norm?  
  - Have actors with opposing views – explicitly or implicitly – attempted to counteract the activities of norm entrepreneurs, undermine the desirability of the norm proposition or promote a conflicting norm proposition? What role have such actors played, and in which organizations?  
  - Have policy stakeholders – explicitly or implicitly – showed a lack of willingness to embrace the proposed norm? |
| Contingencies | - Have contingencies in the form of, for instance, crises, disasters, significant political alterations or clear advancements in technology or knowledge intervened in the norm emergence process? |
Have there been moments of heightened fluidity and openness during the norm emergence process?
- Did norm entrepreneurs recognize the window at the time? If so, how did they take advantage of it?
- How was the window timed in relation to the norm emergence process and what was the status of the other factors at that time?
- Did the window lead to a leap forward in norm acceptance?

Table 4. Analytical questions derived from the framework
4. Research design

The introduction to this dissertation set out briefly the overall research design for the study. This chapter elaborates on the research design with a special emphasis on methodological considerations. It also focuses on methods per se, materials and limitations. The chapter shows why a case study design that employs the selected cases as plausibility probes of the novel framework is the most suitable option for this stage of the theory development sought in this thesis.

The present study examines two cases of potential norm acceptance in international politics. One aim of this thesis is to contribute to theory on norm evolution in general and norm acceptance in particular. It builds an analytical framework for the study of norm acceptance that is more nuanced than previous frameworks and then evaluates this framework using two case studies as “plausibility probes”. The theoretical framework is used to deepen our understanding of the outcomes in each case – and the case study findings, in turn, inform the framework for future revision and further development.

The remainder of this chapter outlines different, interlinked aspects of the methodological considerations underlying the study. It starts with a discussion of the epistemological and ontological positions of this thesis. Section 4.2. provides a justification of the choice of plausibility probes and the case study format. This is followed by discussion on why and how existing theoretical approaches have been refined to suit the aim of this thesis. The chapter then covers material selection, strategies for analysis and the various considerations required to assess the results of the study.

4.1. The epistemological and ontological positions of this thesis

We need more flexible assumptions about main actors and their motives than those of rationalism to explain appropriately the politics of anger, loyalty and a sense of justice at international levels. However, constructivism’s emphasis on ideational motivations cannot totally replace rationalism in explaining international political life. Constructivism maintains that identity or norms are causally prior to actors’ interests. Yet when there is conflict between pursuit of interests and maintenance of identity or norms, actors’ strong and well-defined self-interests can overrule their contested or unstable identity or norms. In short,
causal arrows can flow in either direction between identity or norms and interests. This implies that rationalism and constructivism are complementary rather than competitive in explaining international political life.

(Choi 2015)

As ia been discussed above, undertaking norm research in the constructivist field does not necessarily imply a purely interpretivist (in contrast to a positivist) approach to epistemological and ontological issues. Having said that, this study is primarily situated within a constructivist tradition. The primary interest is in the role of norms in international politics and the study views all aspects of political life, such as norms, interests, identities and relationships, as changeable – as being constantly under construction – rather than fixed and static in nature. However, the reader is likely to perceive this thesis as more rational in its assumptions and methods than the majority of contemporary constructivist research. This section thus aims to clarify the underlying assumptions and standpoints of the study.

In relation to previous constructivist research, this thesis is closest to the modernist and pragmatic realist tradition (Adler 2013), positioned within the thin (Hay 2002:206) or weak (Adler 2013) programme, discussed above. It might be assumed that the thinner side of constructivism would be more prone to acknowledge rationalist explanations for norm evolution than the thicker side, which generally tends to emphasize the structural side and the more abstract aspects of norm evolution and effects. For the purpose of this thesis, this implies the following.

First, interpretation is inescapable in research and when doing research on norms, interpretation takes place in several stages. Actors interpret the meaning of norms and the researcher undertakes an interpretation of the meaning of norms as well as a secondary interpretation of how the examined actors understand them. Nonetheless, this study takes an ontological standpoint in which a material world is acknowledged and some ontological and epistemological claims are considered more valid than others. It thus follows that this study is methodologically close to rational scholars. Even though political events and developments can be considered contingent, it is nonetheless considered possible – and of interest – to try to reveal general patterns and processes, as well as the presence and absence of factors. In this thesis, this is done through the use of a systematic framework and through a careful tracing of processes. Both of these can then be related to existing knowledge and used for further studies of norm acceptance.

Second, in contrast to the majority of constructivist research, norms are treated here as a dependent, rather than an independent, variable. This means that this thesis is interested in how norms are created, emerge and become accepted at the international level. The characteristics of a norm proposition as such are thus here understood as one of several variables contributing to the
outcome: the acceptance of a norm proposition in the international community (which is not to be equated with internalization).

Third, this thesis considers it possible that norms and political developments might follow both a logic of appropriateness and a logic of consequence. Which norms become accepted can reflect the material interests of major powers, but do not always do so. As Müller & Wünderlich have shown in their study on norm dynamics in international arms control: “Great powers do not always get what they want, and norm change (like the specification of the nuclear disarmament norm) can emerge against their preferences” (Müller and Wunderlich 2013:362). In addition, the moral interests resulting from a “value-oriented rationality” (Choi 2015) sometimes serve as a better explanation for successful norm acceptance. At the same time, as in for instance the case of protection for climate-induced migrants, political will based on interests seems to have been hindering developments, despite a common understanding of the “goodness” of the proposed norm.

4.2. Plausibility probes and the choice of case studies

The primary aim of this thesis is to expand current understanding of why some norm propositions become accepted in the international community and some do not. The thorough assessment of existing approaches to explaining norm evolution conducted in the previous chapters, shows that such approaches display a number of deficits and insufficiencies. The development of a new framework is therefore required, and the cases have been selected to probe the plausibility of the proposed framework and generate suggestions for further revision and research.

A plausibility probe is a type of case study where the case aims to establish the potential value of theoretical formulations generated from preparatory procedures in order to determine whether more generalizable tests are worth pursuing (Eckstein, 1975:108ff). In other words:

…a plausibility probe is comparable to a pilot study in experimental or survey research. It allows the researcher to sharpen a hypothesis or theory, to refine the operationalization or measurement of key variables, or to explore the suitability of a particular case as a vehicle for testing a theory.

(Levy 2008:6)

In addition:

…the apposite research logic is one of discovery and not of proof. The purpose is to improve one’s conceptualization of a topic, probe its plausibility against a range of data and eventually generate hypotheses among its conclusions.

(Schmitter 2008:271)
Plausibility probes can thus be understood as “an intermediary step between hypothesis generation and hypothesis testing” (Levy 2008:3). Using this design, the results produced from this study can be used to evaluate the frameworks plausibility and to encourage further testing.

Plausibility probes are preferred over a purely comparative case study design for a variety of reasons. Most importantly, a plausibility probe is better suited to advancing developments in theory. A comparative case study is often designed to compare the absence or presence of certain variables in order to identify which factor is causally linked to the outcome (Lewis and McNaughton Nicholls 2014:65; Ragin 1987:6; see also Mill 1843). However, a strict test of this kind can become problematic if there are more variables than cases (George and Bennett 2005; King, Keohane, and Verba 1994). Moreover, whereas a comparative design is better for testing hypotheses, plausibility probes are more suited to generating new ones (Levy 2008; Schmitter 2008). When a particular aspect of interest has not been widely tested in a specific setting before – in this case, the aspect of contingencies in norm emergence – a plausibility probe is thus a more sound and fruitful choice for developing new knowledge. This will generate more significant theoretical and empirical insights and suggestions and a more robust framework for future research.

George and Bennett (2005:5) describe the case study approach as “the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events”. Gerring (2004:341) defines a case study as “an intensive study of a single unit with an aim to generalize across a larger set of units”. The main reasons for choosing a qualitative, in-depth case study method for this thesis follows two rationales – corresponding to the empirical and theoretical objectives of this thesis, respectively.

First, in order to fully understand the outcome of the selected cases, the qualitative case study approach has clear advantages over alternative methods for identifying, exploring and assessing explanations and complex causal mechanisms. Qualitative data are often “rich in the levels of explanation they can offer” (Ritchie et al. 2014:285f) and the value of case studies, as opposed to quantitative studies, is that they allow for careful assessment of a case from many different angles. As Lewis & McNaughton Nicholls (2014:65) put it:

In quantitative research, the purpose is to measure difference. The value of comparative qualitative research is in understanding rather than measuring difference.

Consequently, a plausibility probe based on case studies allows for a deep empirical investigation, and has considerable potential for assessing a rich set of variables, accounting for contextual factors, discovering new and important
variables and accounting for the complexities and nuances of the mechanisms at work in norm acceptance (George and Bennett 2005; Levy 2008).

Second, a process-oriented approach employing not more than two case studies also allows for the consideration of equifinality; that is, the possibility that there are “many alternative causal paths to the same outcome” (George and Bennett 2005:10). While the two plausibility probes employed here trace different outcomes, the careful investigation of each case allows for the discovery of neglected influential components, alternative explanations and expectations of the specific conditions under which certain factors seem to have a certain effect – hypotheses that can be elaborated through further testing in the future.

Of course, a case study approach requires the analyst to take care over several aspects. Case study methods have been criticized on the grounds that they are non-scientific or noncumulative (that it is difficult to obtain generalizable knowledge) or essentially descriptive rather than theory-driven (Macridis and Brown 1955; Rosenau 1968). According to George and Bennett (2005), these problems can be ameliorated if the researcher clearly identifies the class of events of which the case(s) are instances, if the research objective is clearly defined, if an appropriate research strategy is chosen and if the variables are of theoretical interest and seek to provide explanations.

Good qualitative case study analysis requires variables and other applied concepts that are well-defined and fairly homogenous. This places requirements on the definition of concepts as well as the operationalization of the factors in the theoretical framework. Therefore, this study has ensured that the same components are used across cases, and if possible also in relation to previous studies on similar processes (as was suggested by George and Bennett 2005; Goertz and Mahoney 2009). For the same reason, this thesis has used concepts and definitions that are well-established in the research field, unless there was a justification for introducing a new concept. (This was done, for instance, with the concept of a “norm proposition”). George and Bennett (2005:70f) argue that this can reasonably be done if existing concepts do not encompass what the researcher is seeking for or if the conceptual gap itself is the focus of research.

As mentioned above, the case studies are designed as plausibility probes rather than a comparative case study. However, analyzing two cases, instead of one, is believed to provide more robust and plausible results. A comparative, albeit subordinate, element is thus also included. In this regard, some inspiration was taken from the method of structured, focused comparison (George and Bennett 2005). This analytical strategy aims to ensure comparable data in a small-n case study setting that aims to building on past research through an accumulation of findings. Comparability is achieved by structuring each case study according to a set of standardized questions or topics that are derived from the theoretical framework, reflects the research objective and
are, of course, held constant in both cases. Each factor of the framework represents a focal point around which each case analysis is structured and from which potential value can be established. This potential value is then further evaluated against the corresponding result from the second plausibility probe.

In a plausibility probe case study design, the primary aim is not to provide definitive causal explanations or to produce generalizable results, but rather to suggest theoretical expectations that can be tested at a later stage in a setting with stronger possibilities for generalizable inferences. On the topic of explanations, two important points should to be made here. First, explanations should not be understood here as claims to determine causal effects or presenting proofs as such results are not possible with this design. Instead, as in most qualitative research, explanations should be regarded as conjectures and the identification of factors and elements that are important for the outcomes (Spencer, Ritchie, O’Connor et al. 2014). Second, with this understanding of explanations in mind, the framework constructed here aims to be a tool to help explaining outcomes in these cases of norm acceptance. However, this particular thesis can only go so far as to probe into the empirical cases, generating suggestions for improved understanding.

Since these case studies are employed in relation to theory – which is the result of previous generalizations – the new knowledge generated can be understood as subjects of analytical generalization (or logical inference) rather than statistical inference (Blaikie 2010; Yin 2003). Case study results can thus be generalized in relation to theory. A similar argument is made by Goertz and Mahoney (2009) in their discussion of “causal homogeneity” and “causal scope”. In their account, the theoretical model applied to the cases must be specific enough to “identify key independent variables and/or correctly specify their interrelationships” (Goertz and Mahoney 2009:313). In case study research, causal homogeneity can be understood as the state when a given independent variable – or combination of variables – would have the same effect on the dependent variable across cases. The causal scope should be understood – similar to Yin’s (2003) argument – in relation to existing theory, and a great deal of the case study’s value lies therein. For instance, cases that align with existing theory are theory-confirming and thus illustrate or even expand the scope of the theory, while cases that contradict general theory limits the scope of the same. In addition, the researcher might also find or suggest still another cause that is necessary to explain the case, and thus engage in a theory developing effort (Goertz and Mahoney 2009).

This thesis thus argues that a new theoretical framework must be developed to answer the research question in a deeper way, and to provide new and useful insights into knowledge on norm evolution and acceptance in international politics. Given the novelty of the proposed framework, a case study approach in which the two cases serve to explore the plausibility of the theoretical claims is the most suitable design for this stage of development of a new theoretically informed perspective. Using two cases, instead of one strengthens
the plausibility of the results while still allowing for an in-depth analysis that encompasses the full complexity inherent in an event in the social world.

4.3. Case selection

The norm propositions investigated in this thesis reflect suggestions for new norms that the international community has been requested to accept, adopt and adhere to. The findings derived from studying these cases will suggest patterns that might be found in other cases of international norm emergence. Indeed, these cases fall within a category of norms that have wide-ranging, cross-border implications and a big impact on people’s lives. Moreover, they require collective action; that is, official positioning and action on behalf of the international community in order to spread and be taken up. In addition, their application is key to how well the global community addresses its greatest challenges related to climate security, migration, global health and crisis management, among other things.

The specific instances of norm propositions (regarding disaster risk reduction and international protection for climate-induced migration) purposively sampled for this study are selected not only because they are interesting in themselves, but also because they represent norm propositions in international politics that have several similar qualities but variations with regard to their eventual acceptance.

Apart from being norm propositions on the international agenda, these cases are considered particularly suitable for illustrating and evaluating the plausibility of the framework for several reasons. First, they could be expected to be particularly susceptible to different kinds of focusing events. In the cases of disaster risk reduction and international protection for climate-induced migration, a number of more or less salient contingencies – be they disasters, new technology or political and public sentiments – have had the potential to influence the norm emergence and acceptance process. These cases will thus offer an opportunity to investigate whether these contingencies have indeed left a mark on the norm emergence process, and, if so, how and under what circumstances.

This thesis focuses on norm propositions in a United Nations setting. Norms can, of course, be accepted and/or diffused bilaterally, regionally or in multilateral platforms outside the UN; for example, in other intergovernmental organizations such as NATO or the World Trade Organization (WTO). Nonetheless, the UN has played an agenda-setting role on many issues throughout its history, such as on women’s rights (Krook and True 2012), in conflict prevention (Björkdahl 2013) and increasingly in climate change politics, for instance through the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC. As such, the UN is both a reflector of and a catalyst for change in international relations (Ryan 2000). However, the UN system has been subject
to critique over the years, and various flaws and failures have been revealed (Luck 2004; Ryan 2000). Nonetheless, it is still an important norm- and standard-setter, not least as a result of its universal membership (Sills 2004; Weiss 2015) and because it serves as the basis of the international legal system (Ryan 2000). The UN is a well-defined, multilateral platform for states to negotiate and find common ground, which makes it a useful setting for research interested in norm diffusion and policymaking at the global level. International policymaking is, after all, different from national policymaking, and selecting cases which are discussed within the UN system also makes it possible to study the role of international organizations and their secretariats in this process.

Both selected cases have thus been subject to discussion within the UN system. They are included in the climate change policy sphere and they have arrived fairly recently on the international policy agenda. Climate-induced migration has been called “the human face of climate change” and has spurred calls for international protection for those affected. While the issue attracted much attention and policymaker interest in the years 2007-2008, the norm acceptance process was stymied and stalled before it had a chance to gain broad acceptance in the international community. Nonetheless, it has not yet been completely removed from the international agenda. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) has achieved a different outcome. After norm entrepreneurs had a fairly difficult time in gaining traction for the issue, the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami had an immense impact on the norm’s development. In 2015, the norm proposition was formalized into the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Disaster Risk Reduction has thus reached a broad and high level of acceptance, even if it still has some way to go before it has been implemented thoroughly at the national level. The study traces both cases up until the “super summit” year of 2015, which hosted the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, COP21 in Paris and the finalization of the Sustainment Development Goals (SDGs) – as well as other, related, international conferences.

The selection of contemporary cases posed challenges for the research process as some of the events were still unfolding as the studies were being conducted. That said, the opportunity to follow some of the developments in real time proved immensely useful for an in-depth understanding of the cases and the ability to capture their complexities.

Against this background, it is clear that the cases share several traits, but it should be stressed that the primary aim of this study is not comparative, and the cases were not selected primarily on the basis of their similarities. Rather, they were selected because each case is expected to be able to make specific important contributions to probing the plausibility of the theoretical suggestions of this thesis – as they offer different insights and angles for understanding norm acceptance success and failure. The knowledge generated from one case analysis is primarily expected to complement the knowledge generated
from the other; the source of knowledge production does not lie in comparison at this stage of the research. Moreover, the selected norm propositions are inherently interesting not least because they have the potential to make a huge impact on people’s lives and the responsibilities of states all over the world. How the specific nature of the norms – their content, framing and implications – impacts norm acceptance is addressed through the framework developed in chapter 3.

The cases have intentionally not been framed in terms of “easy” or “hard” cases as that type of language is not fully compatible with the strategy of using plausibility probes.\textsuperscript{20} As Klotz (2008) argues, a plausibility probe relies on a different logic and posits a different relationship between theory and empirical evidence than that of a design that sets out to use “easy” and “hard” case tests. The objective here is not to simply reject or confirm a certain theory’s assumptions, but to develop new theoretical arguments and probe how well these can be translated in empirical terms. The analysis can distill and offer an array of theoretical implications, of varying significance. Therefore, the plausibility probes employed in this thesis will generate more detailed theoretical claims, the robustness of which can then be tested on easy or hard cases in future studies.

4.4. Material selection and data management

Three types of material are used to investigate these cases: interviews; written material from involved actors, such as policy documents, statements or reports; and secondary material, such as other academic accounts of the course of events. This combination of the different types of material provides different perspectives of the accounts which together build a detailed and nuanced understanding of the process and achieves an account that is as accurate as possible.\textsuperscript{21} The official documentation, such as UN documents, provided an account of developments at different times, revealed the use and crafting of language and concepts, and illustrated representations of different stakeholder’s official standpoints. Official texts also reflected the work process in practice as well as actors’ own descriptions of the phenomena connected to the norm propositions. However, while official written documents reflect actors’ viewpoints and accounts of events, they often have the character of a “finished product” and therefore do not give the complete picture of preceding

\textsuperscript{20} An easy case is a case that is expected to be easy for a theory to explain, but it proves inadequate – usually because the outcome is unexpected. A hard case, on the other hand, has characteristics which at first glance would be inconsistent with a certain theory, but the theory ends up explaining it surprisingly well. Both easy and hard cases can be considered extreme tests of theories and their assumptions.

\textsuperscript{21} The technique of using different data sources to obtain as accurate and holistic a picture as possible is also known as “triangulation” (Rothbauer 2008).
debates, discussions and conflicts. In this regard, the interviews provided more substance in terms of internal discussions, negotiations, resistance and strategies. As many of the interviews were done with actors who could be considered norm entrepreneurs in different ways, the interviews also provided an in-depth account of how they view their role in developments. In addition to the interviews and primary material, secondary material in the form of previous academic research on the cases has been used in order to paint a bigger picture and to serve as a backdrop to the analysis in this study. Occasionally, the empirical descriptions available in these studies have been considered in the analysis, partly because the relationship between individual academics and policymakers is of interest to the analysis but also because some of these academic researchers have accessed information (for example through observation) that has not been available to others.

Interviews were conducted in person in Geneva, Brussels, Liège, Stockholm and Karlstad, as well as via Skype or telephone – primarily with representatives of relevant organizations, government officials and academics. The interviews fulfilled three important functions. First, they provided detail and background on the official documents and (sometimes sensitive) information regarding discussions, meetings and work processes that is not contained in such documents. The interviews proved especially valuable when gathering information on variables such as conflict and resistance, since the written documents and reports often reflect only part of these aspects. Second, the interviews helped to identify other key people and important documents. Thus, they served as a way to ensure that no crucial sources or aspects were missed. According to Blaikie (2010:207), in-depth qualitative interviews are a means to “get close to the social actors’ meanings and interpretations, to their accounts of the social interaction in which they have been involved”.

Suitable interviewees for the study were found and selected primarily through the “snowballing” method. This methodological principle begins with identifying a small number of appropriate interview subjects and then using their knowledge and networks to find other useful interviewees. These people are, in turn, asked to suggest further interview subjects, and so on. Thus, the sample of interviewees grows organically and exponentially like a snowball (Blaikie 2010). This technique was particularly useful in this study as the total population of practitioners working on this issue is difficult to define, and since staff rosters or other names of individuals were not always readily available. Nor did official information always reveal the most appropriate candidates. In this study, a first set of interviewees was identified through direct inquiries to key actors in the field. These interviewees then suggested other possible interview candidates. The written material as well as participant lists from events and seminars were also helpful for finding the most suitable individuals. One aim of the sampling was to include individuals at different levels, in different organizations and with different mandates. As George and Bennett (2005) point out, lower-level officials who deal with the everyday business of
a particular issue are likely to have much more detailed and stronger recollections of how an issue was handled or decisions carried out than an official in a more senior position. In turn, the high-level official might have a better understanding of the bigger picture and the reasons why a certain decision was made (p. 103). The snowballing method proved useful also as interview inquiries could include references to people the interview candidate knew, which was especially helpful in getting access to interviewees at higher levels.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured, in-depth manner. The core of the interview guide remained the same but particular questions were adapted and refined over time, and depending on the type of information the interviewee could possibly provide and the desire to evaluate specific aspects of the theoretical framework. Interviews conducted in the early stages of the case studies had a somewhat more general character; while they became more focused on particular aspects as the theoretical approach evolved. In general, however, interviewees were encouraged to speak fairly freely around each topic raised. Box 2 presents the core of the interview guide; that is, the questions that were of interest throughout the project and which were touched upon in one way or another in all the interviews conducted.

1. Where did this norm proposition come from and how did it emerge?
2. What is your and your organization’s role in developments?
   a. What are your objectives?
   b. What are your strategies?
3. Who are the main actors and who are the primary drivers of this issue?
4. Do you think this norm proposition has been successful or unsuccessful in terms of acceptance in the international community?
   a. Explain why.
   b. What are the main reasons for this development and outcome?
5. What were the most crucial moments in developments?
   a. Why were they crucial?
   b. How did this/these crucial point(s) influence developments?
6. Has there been resistance regarding this norm proposition?
   a. If yes: from whom, in what forms and for what reasons?
   b. If no: why not?
7. Can you suggest other people who should be interviewed?

Box 2. Interview guide
In order to limit leading questions and the potential bias of the researcher’s own presuppositions, the interviewees were given space to reflect freely around each topic. This approach was time-consuming (in comparison to, for instance, a more structured interview or a questionnaire) but produced very rich data. However, it also places more demands on the researcher to conduct a sound analysis when the material is interpreted and classified according to the analytical framework.

The researcher plays a delicate role during the interviewing process, and there are different views on which role can or should be taken as well as what information can be retrieved from this type of data source. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) for instance, describe the interviewer’s approach as that of either a miner or a traveler. In the miner approach, which is largely consistent with a positivist standpoint, knowledge is *collected* in the interview. The interviewees’ knowledge is carved out by the researcher during the interview – but this knowledge stays intact and unaffected by the intrusion of the interviewer, the nature of the questions and the structure of the interview. In the traveler approach, which is more consistent with a critical tradition, on the other hand, knowledge is *constructed* during the interview in the interaction between the researcher and the interviewee, and neither is neutral or remains unaffected by the encounter (see also Holstein and Gubrium 2011).

The miner and the traveler are, of course, ideal types and interview technique and the understanding of the interviewer’s role have, in this research process, been inspired by both. In the data collection for this thesis, the interviews have been regarded as wells from which knowledge which can be “collected” and the aim has been to stay as neutral and objective as possible towards the answers. It was also an aim to keep key questions as open and neutral as possible. However, the information retrieved from the interview answers represents an individual’s understanding and perception of events and must be assessed with particular aspects in mind, such as, the formulation of the questions, the position of the individual interview participant, the participant’s own background and interests, as well as the interests of the organization he or she represents – and the researcher’s own interpretation of the answers. At the same time, the interviews reflect a cumulative data collection process. The conversations have inspired new ideas and questions, and have inevitably provided insights to be used in subsequent interviews. In addition, as much as objectivity and neutrality have been striven for, it has also been clear that interviewees have been affected by the interview in the way that the topics and questions raised sometimes spurred the interviewee to think in certain ways or make certain judgments or interpretations they had not previously thought of – even though these conclusions may be their own. In sum, the

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22 However, similar points of caution must be considered also when assessing official documents – even though more individuals have been involved in these and each sentence have been considered more carefully.
inspiration from the different interviewer roles has boiled down to an attempt to be an “active listener” in the interview situation, in order to make the most of the interview data and the opportunity that the interview provided. As an active listener, the researcher must take in not only the words spoken, but the meaning and nuances of what is being said (or not being said), relate this to the focus of the interview and use this understanding as well as previous knowledge to ask relevant sub-questions and to follow up on the most interesting and relevant themes (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Yeo et al. 2014). This includes being prepared to capture unexpected answers or topics that need further exploration.

This pragmatic view of the role of the researcher, and the quality of interview data, has strong support in the literature on qualitative research (see for example Miller and Glassner 2011; Yeo et al. 2014). The interview itself is inevitably an interaction to some extent, but there is still knowledge that can be retrieved that has been largely unaffected by the interview situation, especially regarding the interviewee’s experiences, interpretations and – often well-informed – understandings of the developments (Yeo et al. 2014). As such, interviews remain an invaluable and unique data source.

The above observations speak partly to the question of research ethics, which arise at various stages of the research process (Creswell and Poth 2018:55). In this study, as in all research studies, ethical issues required consideration from time-to-time but were largely of a minor nature. One such issue concerned the involvement and possible exploitation of human subjects. The kinds of officials interviewed for this study were fully employed representatives of well-known public and private organizations, for which issues of exploitation are perhaps less relevant. Nonetheless, the following steps were taken in order to minimize stress during interviews and to make them as mutually beneficial as possible without contaminating the interview data. Full information regarding the nature and purpose of this study was discussed at the beginning of interviews, consent for recording interviews was always sought and anonymity in relation to direct quotes was assured. It was also ensured that interview length did not go beyond what had been mutually agreed. One particular consideration was the trade-off between giving something back to the interviewee and avoiding sharing personal impressions. Many of the interviewees showed an interest in the results and theoretical insights in their field, and this was also a way to make the meeting valuable for them. However, in order not to affect the interview data, preliminary results or insights were very restrictively discussed, and if they were this was saved for the very end of the meeting. Instead, papers from the study have been publicly presented throughout the project, including presentations at international conferences.

The length of the interviews in this study ranged from 20 minutes to 2½ hours, with the majority lasting around one hour. Some interviews were conducted over two sessions. Most of the interviews were recorded and the audio
files were transcribed either in part (based on the answers of most interest to the analytical framework) or in their entirety. A small number of the interviews were not recorded, but instead subject to close-to-verbatim note taking. To ensure the anonymity of the interview subjects (in terms of the information given and quotes) the organizations that the interviewees represent are described in appendices 1 and 2, but the identity of the interviewee is not revealed in relation to the interview number.\footnote{This information can be made available on request to the author of this study, provided that the interviewee in question gives his/her approval.}

When assessing the interviews as well as the written material, it was necessary to consider the position of the interviewee as well as the “sender” of the document: “In interpreting the meaning and significance of what is said, the analyst should consider who is speaking to whom, for what purpose and under what circumstances” (George and Bennett 2005:99f). In the cases employed in this thesis, it was evident that several interviewees were closely connected to each other and often also to policy makers. As an interviewer and analyst, it was thus important to keep in mind the possible personal interests the interview subjects might have in answering the questions in a specific fashion. When selecting the interview subjects, an aim was therefore to find persons at different “distances” from policymakers and with different potential personal and professional interests. However, the overall impression was that interviewees were surprisingly outspoken – even on topics that it was expected would be more difficult and sensitive. Of course, advocates might tend to emphasize their own work as more important or prospects as brighter than they really are. To ameliorate this tendency, interviewees were often asked not only about their own work, but also about the work of others. Another general impression was that interviewees tended to be even more forthright when the interviews were not recorded. In each case, it was thus a delicate decision whether to record the interview or take notes. An important consideration when collecting data through interviews is to assess the credibility and veracity of the statements. A substantial part of the information provided in the interviews could be supported by other parts of the material, in either documents or other interviews. For other types of information, which could not be directly verified, it was of great importance to use and present this data in an appropriate way in the analysis. This kind of information often concerned the participants own interpretations and experience of a certain process and was thus valuable as such – even though it could not be taken as fact.

The material was approached from different angles and the procedure for working through this – relatively large – mass of data followed the following structure. First, all the interview notes and transcriptions as well as a number
of key documents were read and coded sentence by sentence. NVivo - a software for qualitative data analysis\textsuperscript{24} – functioned as a support in this process. The codification and classification were done according to the factors of the framework with some additional categories such as “background”; “formulation of norm proposition” and “additional explanations”. Qualitative coding is sometimes accused of being highly subjective (Blaikie 2010:212; Spencer et al. 2014:278). For the sake of transparency, the case study analyses tried to bring out quotes from the written as well as the spoken accounts. This not only illustrates the process, but also exemplifies how the material was coded in relation to the factors of the framework.

In the next step, the mass of texts (especially very large reports or documents) were searched using specific keywords (see examples in Table 5) and accordingly coded where appropriate.\textsuperscript{25} This exercise was reiterated throughout the duration of the study as new information emerged and in order to fill gaps and to gain a comprehensive understanding of each case in relation to the theoretical framework. The material was processed through a two-track qualitative technique, composed of structured NVivo analysis – which is used to classify, code and analyze material in a formal and systematic way – combined with a more holistic interpretive assessment by the researcher. Often, a truly qualitative understanding and assessment of meaning in the data was necessary to evaluate the influence of each factor in the framework. The importance of institutionalization or resistance, for instance, is not expressed merely through specific concepts but through a subjective interpretation of the material as a whole. Similarly, an assessment of windows of opportunity or the influence of contingencies requires a much broader understanding of the unfolding of events than is represented in the keywords below. It should therefore be emphasized that the text searches were used to complement the qualitative classification and coding in order to support the analysis made there – or to search for confounding data to make the qualitative assessment open to rebuttal. NVivo was thus used to get an initial overview of the material and to systematize it. A qualitative assessment was carried out in the next step followed by systematic searches of the material in order to verify the validity of the subjective analysis.

\textsuperscript{24} NVivo is used for Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS). The main reason for making use of computational support for qualitative analysis is that it "enables substantive, generic ‘codes’ to be applied across a set of cases as well as within each individual case, with a view to the ‘retrieval’ for analytic purposes of all similarly coded data” (Fielding and Warnes 2009:272). It must be stressed that CAQDAS is nothing more than a helpful tool for the researcher. The quality of the analysis still relies on the quality of the researcher’s interpretations and the queries posed on the material, through the software.

\textsuperscript{25} Stemmed words were also included in these text search queries.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Example of search words</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Norm entrepreneurs</strong></td>
<td>Key actor(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Important actor(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Driving actor(s)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“the work of”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Advocate(s)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The norm itself</strong></td>
<td>Clear</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unclear</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complex</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Effects on”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Consequences</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficult</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Framing</strong></td>
<td>“everyone’s interest”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“everyone’s responsibility”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Vulnerable</td>
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<td>Harm</td>
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<td>Development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Humanitarian</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“is an issue of”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Venue</strong></td>
<td>Venue</td>
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<td>Platform</td>
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<td>Mandate</td>
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<td>Institution, Institutionalized</td>
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<td>Responsibility</td>
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<td><strong>Resistance</strong></td>
<td>Conflict</td>
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<td>Different views</td>
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<td>Different opinions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Consensus</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
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<td>Political will</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Resistance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Neglect</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(de-)prioritization</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contingencies</strong></td>
<td>“window(s) of opportunity”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>opportunity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“the right time”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“not the right time”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>timely</td>
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<td></td>
<td>untimely</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“coincided with”</td>
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Table 5. Examples of keywords used in text searches of the material
In both cases, the available UN documentation was abundant, even excessive to a degree that is beyond the scope of a qualitative study. The selection procedure for primary documents therefore largely followed the snowballing method outlined above (Blaikie 2010). Key documents were identified through the web pages of involved actors (larger organizations often have a theme page listing strategic documents), by searching web-based UN archives, in the secondary literature and – not least – through suggestions from the interview objects. Some documents were found and selected through references in other documents that signaled their importance. The primary documentation consists of: decisions and agreements; general reports; specific/topical reports; statements, speeches, policy briefs and work plans; and reports and documents from NGOs and international organizations outside of the core UN system.

The cases sampled in this study are contemporary in time-span, which has proved to be a challenge as well as an asset. It has been challenging since some of the events have unfolded in parallel with the study, and the material and interviews are necessarily viewed through that lens. At the same time, however, the contemporary aspects of the cases have proved a great asset as material and interviewees with key positions in the process have been readily available and fairly accessible. That said, both norm propositions can be traced back at least three decades. Thus, the accessibility of the newer material must come with careful consideration of weighing recent material in relation to older documents and accounts.

* * *

In sum, the advantage of this study’s design is the opportunity to encompass a rich set of variables that can account for the complexities and nuances of the mechanisms at work in norm acceptance. This will generate more significant theoretical and empirical suggestions and a more robust analytical framework than would have been possible with a large-n sample in a quantitative approach. The thesis thus far has been devoted to laying the theoretical foundations of the study, constructing the analytical framework, and to describing and justifying the research design. The thesis now moves on to the empirical part of the study, and to probing the plausibility of the theoretical suggestions implied by the framework. It first looks at disaster risk reduction – a successful case of norm acceptance – and then examines the question of international protection for climate-induced migration – a thus far unsuccessful case of norm acceptance.
5. Disaster Risk Reduction

Disaster risk reduction has had, in the past ten years, an amazing progress. It is moving at a pace that other areas don’t.

(Interview 2.12)

In March 2015, Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, was in the midst of negotiations on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). With the International Conference on Financing for Development, the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda and COP21 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) coming up after the conference in Sendai, 2015 had become widely known as “super summit” year (Mysiak et al. 2016). Wahlström hoped that taking the opportunity to place the Sendai Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction as the first one in the 2015 conference calendar, the message of the proposed outcome from Sendai would influence the negotiations to follow in this year. As we will see below, it did indeed do this. However, the Sendai negotiations also became the first round of testing the issues, not always related to DRR as such, that would transcend all agreements to be concluded during the year. The more complex issues required substantial time during the last few days of negotiations in Sendai and prolonged negotiations. Eventually, however, the world’s nations arrived at a compromise around the abiding principles of DRR and agreed on the Sendai framework – a much more specified agreement than its predecessor, the Hyogo Framework for Action. The international community had taken a general idea about what actions should be taken and why, and formalized it into a formal agreement on DRR. Acceptance of the proposed norm to reduce disaster risk had been achieved.

Disaster risk reduction has its origins in academic interests of the 1970s, when researchers began to accentuate the consequences of future disasters if the issue was not properly addressed. Historically, there had already been a history of the United Nations fulfilling a function during disasters. A specialized UN agency for disaster relief – the United Nations Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO), the predecessor of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and UNISDR – was created in 1971, but its general objective was to respond to disasters rather than to reduce or manage risks (Hannigan, 2012; Interview 2.4). Even though the United Nations General Assembly had already appointed the 1990s the “International Decade
for Natural Disaster Reduction” (IDNDR), the idea of states cooperating with each other to generate research and reduce disaster impacts had not initially caught on in the policy community. Then Hurricane Andrew hit the United States full blast in 1992, unavoidably turning the spotlight on disaster impacts (Interview 2.1).

The first of, thus far, world conferences on disaster reduction, was held in Yokohama, Japan, in 1994. The outcome of the conference was the “Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation” (World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, 1994), which was the first step in formalizing the norm proposition of reducing disaster risk. By the late 1990s, however, the UN had come to a crossroad on its work on disaster reduction and was ready to let it go. Due to the persistence of states such as Japan, Germany and Switzerland, as well as the impact of a very powerful El Niño event in 1997–98, however, another path was taken and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) was developed instead. Furthermore, a UN secretariat was established to administer and ensure the implementation of the ISDR – the UNISDR. Exceptionally small compared to other UN secretariats, with only a handful of staff initially, UNISDR had a difficult time influencing and steering other UN bodies. However, it eventually grew into the most important international setting for consultations, negotiations and progress on the alleviation of disaster impacts (Interviews 2.1.; 2.13.; UNISDR, 2012).

After a few years of setting up the structures of the new secretariat, the UN member states were making arrangements for a second world conference on disaster reduction in Kobe in January 2005. The conference was intended as a follow-up to the conference in Yokohama and the strategy adopted there (UNISDR, 2005). On 26 December 2004, only a few weeks before the conference, the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami killed over 200,000 people, mainly in Southeast Asia, making it one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history (UNISDR, 2005). For the conference in Kobe, and for disaster management and risk reduction as a whole, the tsunami changed everything. Suddenly, the acuteness of disaster reduction was undeniable to the states present and the human and economic consequences of disasters were perceived as completely unacceptable (Interview 2.1). Instantly, the status of the Kobe conference was transformed to a high-level event with high-level state representatives, and the size of delegations as well as the cohort of journalists exploded. One of the interviewees described it as “the red carpet was rolled out” (Interviews 2.3; also described in interviews 2.10; 2.11; 2.13). The outcome of the conference in Kobe was the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), 2005–2015, which focused on building resilience to disasters.

From the start, the HFA was intended to have a successor of some type, and once the UNISDR secretariat had established that this was the desire of the international community, an extensive round of regional and global consultations commenced to establish what such a successor framework should
entail (UNISDR, 2013; Interview 2.1). These consultations culminated in the third world conference on disaster risk reduction in Sendai in 2015. Despite the lengthy negotiations, the Sendai Conference was a success. In March 2015, all UNISDR states agreed to adopt the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The framework is unique in its specific and quantified targets for addressing DRR, and was adopted without any major conflict over substance. Not only was the Sendai Framework a much more concrete and specified document than its predecessors but advocates also managed to incorporate the SFDRR and the norm of disaster risk reduction into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement, providing fertile ground for further diffusion of the norm. In general, the evolution of DRR and the adoption of the Sendai Framework is a success story in norm acceptance in international politics.

The question therefore arises, how can we understand this process? This chapter’s examination of the case of DRR is the first time in which the plausibility of the framework (developed in chapter 3) and the importance of its components have been probed. By making use of the analytical framework, this chapter analyzes the developments of DRR from an idea to a widely accepted norm. It explores the importance of each factor and examines their relationships. In doing so, the analysis provides detailed insights into the developments and outcomes in this specific case. The study is set up as a plausibility probe, which demands deep investigation of each proposed variable. The structure of the chapter, and the entailing case analysis, thus correspond with the structure of the theoretical framework. The reader might experience the analysis as somewhat less fluent than a chronological narrative would be able to provide. This structure is, however, a carefully considered choice with the aims of increasing the transparency of the analysis and to more clearly demonstrating the function, plausibility and limitations of the framework.

The proposed norm under study here suggests that the international community should focus its efforts on reducing disaster risk and making vulnerable communities more resilient to an increasing number of natural hazards. Moreover, the norm proposition implies that these efforts should be global and collective in nature and that the international community should agree on uniform standards and arrangements to ensure the safety of persons and material assets.

As the analysis will show, disaster risk reduction as a normative claim can be traced back to the work of the United Nations on reducing disasters, which eventually became increasingly focused on prevention and thus the need to reduce risk. This norm proposition is an example of a successfully accepted normative underpinning of policy action within the international community, given that it has been formalized in three different international agreements (the Yokohama Strategy, the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction) and its normative premises are now mostly unquestioned by governments around the world. This case
of international norm emergence is of particular interest as it has had widespread international acknowledgement and acceptance even though it is a highly complex norm proposition infused with uncertainties, it requires collective action at the global level to be truly effective and it is closely connected to the otherwise rather sensitive area of climate security. The analysis that follows studies each component of the framework in order to fully understand the dynamics of this norm’s evolution and to evaluate the framework’s potential explanatory value. As the reader will see, success in this case can be understood through a fortuitous confluence of events, the coincidence between the Indian Ocean tsunami and the second world conference in Kobe in particular, the “maturity” of norm emergence at this specific point in time, as well as how actors made use of the doors that this window of opportunity opened.

5.1. Actors and agency in disaster risk reduction

The analysis begins by focusing on the initiating and driving actors of norm evolution, and examining who the key players were as well as the activities and strategies they made use of to achieve norm acceptance. The expectation is that the more engaged and coordinated norm entrepreneurs are, the more access they will have to policymakers; and the more prepared for and alert they are to seize contingencies and windows of opportunity, the more significance they will have on the outcome of norm acceptance.

The typical norm entrepreneur in older models of norm evolution, such as the norm life cycle (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998), is a civil society interest group. The material in this case suggests, however, that NGOs have played only a minor role over time in putting the norm proposition on the political agenda and pushing it towards acceptance. With the exception of the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), which engaged with the process at the global level, the role of NGOs has come to be that of norm diffusors (at the regional and national levels) and assistants with local norm implementation (Interviews 2.1; 2.3; 2.4). Instead, the key norm entrepreneurs on DRR can be divided into three categories: scientists; UN representatives, specifically from the UNISDR; and state representatives, from Japan in particular.

A lecture at the 8th World Conference on Earthquake Engineering in San Francisco in 1984 appears briefly but meaningfully in a close reading of the material related to this case. The lecture was given by Frank Press, a geophysicist and President of the US National Academy of Sciences. At this lecture, Press suggested a further political focus on disaster mitigation (going beyond the previous focus on disaster response) and proposed an “international decade” to highlight the related issues. Not only was this the trigger for the subsequent establishment of the IDNDR, but it also induced interest from disaster-prone Japan, which – as is shown below – has had a highly influential impact on the norm developments (Toki 1988).
Frank Press and other representatives of the scientific community, especially earthquake engineers and meteorologists at this early point (Hannigan 2012), were early entrepreneurs and instrumental in raising awareness of these issues – and the need to launch a global effort to reduce disaster risk. Academic engagement in these issues unfolded in parallel and close connection to the political process. One interviewee for this study even argued that it was the academic community that convinced the UNDRO to focus on disaster risk and social vulnerability (Interview 2.4). As noted above, UNDRO was the primary UN agency handling disaster policy before the creation of UNOCHA and UNISDR. Without the efforts of these academics, the focus on disaster risk and the subsequent denomination of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction might have petered out and been forgotten (Interview 2.4).

Developments during the IDNDR also led to the creation of UNISDR, an exceptionally small secretariat in UN terms but with a sole focus on disaster reduction (discussed further below under venue). The material clearly points to that it was the UNISDR that spearheaded the policy developments after this and became the single most important norm entrepreneur in establishing this norm proposition. UNISDR advocated for the issue and drove the agenda in a targeted manner, and has facilitated its progress by working on and diffusing definitions and terminology, for instance, in terms of understanding natural events in relation to risk (Interview 2.5). Through the advocacy of UNISDR, the acceptance of the norm proposition on reducing disaster risk primarily relied upon the conviction and engagement of a small group of individuals (Interview 2.3). This group – the UNISDR secretariat – made efforts to convince UN member states and the private sector to adopt a new way of thinking about disasters, for example to move from preparedness and response to prevention and risk reduction (Interviews 2.8; 2.10).

When an international secretariat has such a strong role in advocating a norm proposition, the distinction between being an entrepreneur and being a civil servant in relation to member states is often blurred. At its establishment, UNISDR was mandated to be the coordinating focal point for DRR (Interview 2.12; UNISDR, 2009a). However, right from the start, when the proposal on the creation of UNISDR was on the table, officials from the IDNDR used dis-

27 It should be noted that a significant number of the interviewees for this study are current or previous representatives of UNISDR, and a large part of the written material has UNISDR as author or publisher. In the analysis, it was therefore necessary to consider the risk of the role of UNISDR being somewhat exaggerated. However, the remaining material does not give any indication that the role of UNISDR as the most important entrepreneur on DRR is exaggerated or wrong. In addition, other studies also identify UNISDR as a key player (see for example Hollis, 2015). Therefore, the overall assessment is that the strong role of the UNISDR is undisputed.
aster-related events such as the serious El Niño event in 1997–98 and Hurricane Mitch in 1998 to attract the international community’s attention to mitigating disaster impacts (Interview 2.13).

Advocacy continued to be an outspoken task of the UNISDR. That is indicated by, for instance, such efforts as the “Advocacy Kit for Parliamentarians” (UNISDR 2010) and in an assessment of all UN agencies work on disaster risk reduction the UNISDR’s core functions are described to include conducting advocacy, awareness campaigns and media outreach” (UNISDR, 2009a:134). Interviews reveal that officials working at UNISDR often see themselves as both norm entrepreneurs and as civil servants. In addition to these roles, UNISDR officials are often invited to speak as experts at DRR-related events and seminars (Interviews 2.11.; 2.13). As an actor, UNISDR has thus had an opportunity to influence norm developments from several angles. One interviewee described these different roles of the UNISDR in the following way:

It is interesting with a secretariat within a broader UN secretariat which is given a mandate by the UN General Assembly to assist and coordinate action around an agenda. That is a very traditional civil service secretariat function. So, it should be entirely neutral; it should be seeking simply the service of member states – and other stakeholders that member states would like to invite to a process. So that is absolutely the typical, technocratic civil servants’ role. However, what we have observed in many of these negotiations is that member states ultimately need technical advice. And they need technical advice to be able to agree upon the norms that they are going to help themselves to. And the technical input comes from us as well. So, we have this kind of schizophrenic nature a little bit in that you have this entirely neutral secretariat function and even a “thought leadership” function there I would say, which is born from technical credibility and expertise, which is much less a typical secretariat civil service function but rather looking at what can be realistic norms that we can help the world conclude are a sensible way to try and move this agenda forward.

(Interview 2.11)

UNISDR’s role as “civil servant entrepreneurs” is reminiscent of the concept of “message entrepreneurs” (Fukuda-Parr and Hulme 2011) who often work within institutional boundaries and are more focused on reaching consensus than safeguarding the original content of the norm. UNISDR worked on two fronts simultaneously to both guard and promote the essence of reducing disaster risk while also trying to find compromises in order to advance the norm proposition towards acceptance – evidently in a fruitful way.

But UNISDR entrepreneurship is also external and goes beyond the boundaries of its own institutional platforms. The interview material shows instrumental advocacy also for the inclusion of DRR in other international agreements, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change. These successful efforts were partly conducted through targeted interventions with certain member states or groups of member states
which then functioned as norm leaders and further promoted the norm – on behalf of UNISDR - to other states in the system (Interviews 2.1.; 2.11; 2.13).

The scientific interest and engagement of what might be called an initial “epistemic community” (Haas 1992) – the earth scientists and meteorologists, as described above – diminished somewhat in the 2000s (Hannigan 2012). It was not until 2011 that its engagement and inclusion were reawakened. Margareta Wahlström had recently been appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction at this time and, together with other stakeholders, was starting to plan for the future and a continuation of the work on DRR after the expiry of the Hyogo Framework for Action in 2015. Wahlström reached out to the scientific community to ask for their help. Their reintroduction into the process helped to reignite the DRR work and put new energy into creating the notion of a HFA2 – a set of policy prescriptions that would later be known as the Sendai Framework (Interview 2.1).

Several states were also helpful in driving the underpinnings of this norm proposition forward. The material gathered for this study, however, shows that one state stands out above all others – Japan. Japan has a history of thinking in terms of resilience and “living with risk”. It ostensibly coined the term. Through having a large proportion of its population living in areas exposed to and with experience of natural catastrophes, DRR has become a national priority and a matter of international prestige. The honor felt in assisting the international community to reach an agreement on disaster risk is demonstrated by the fact that the country has hosted all three of the world conferences in this field (Yokohama in 1994, Kobe in 2005 and Sendai in 2015) and been instrumental in the drafting process (UNISDR, 2005; Interviews 2.3; 2.5).

In sum, norm entrepreneurs – especially UNISDR in this case – have had great leverage and influence over developments. The mandated secretariat that UNISDR constitutes has been able to assert credible influence through its various roles: as a norm entrepreneur (initiating and persuading), as a message entrepreneur (mediating and seeking consensus), as civil servants and as technical experts. It is difficult to see how DRR could have made the clear progress that it has without the creation and the work of UNISDR.

As the analysis continues, it will become evident how the influence of an entrepreneurial agency trickles down through all parts of the analytical framework. Not only is it clear that norm entrepreneurs in this case had the credibility and access to policymakers, as a key tenet of the literature on norm entrepreneurship suggests is required (see for example Björkdahl 2013), but UNISDR and Japan had little trouble accessing supportive policy venues also beyond the core venue of UNISDR such as the UNFCCC and the Sustainable Development Goals. Nonetheless, the UNISDR itself was the most important policy venue in this case – as is discussed in greater detail below. We will also see how entrepreneurs, and the UNISDR in particular, were instrumental in seizing the windows of opportunity that propelled the norm acceptance process.
5.2. The norm itself: content and clarity

The analytical framework (set out in chapter 3), suggests that a well-defined and clear norm proposition that is not too wide in scope facilitates progress in norm emergence – especially when there is a relatively high level of consensus regarding the norm. The emerging norm under study here proposes that the international community should ensure the safety of vulnerable communities in the case of disasters by reducing risk. What is particularly interesting and surprising in this case is that the norm proposition concerning the reduction of disaster risk has reached such a broad level of international acceptance even though it is highly complex, in that it constitutes a cluster of more specific norm propositions that are discussed and handled together.

An analysis of the conceptualization of this norm proposition through the three international agreements shows how key concepts have evolved from “natural disaster reduction” in the Yokohama Strategy to “disaster reduction” in the Hyogo Framework for Action to “disaster risk reduction” in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, thereby demonstrating an increased focus on risk. Paragraph 15 of the Sendai Framework, quoted below, has been called “the nucleus of the nucleus” (Interview 2.12) because it defines the scope and purpose of the SFDRR.

The present Framework will apply to the risk of small-scale and large-scale, frequent and infrequent, sudden and slow-onset disasters caused by natural or man-made hazards, as well as related environmental, technological and biological hazards and risks. It aims to guide the multihazard management of disaster risk in development at all levels as well as within and across all sectors.

(UNISDR, 2015:§15)

The norm proposition of DRR entails a number of more detailed aspects, such as mortality reduction, the availability of and access to early warning systems, as well as the reduction of economic losses from disasters (United Nations 2015b). The undeniably catastrophic effects of major disasters illustrate a clear causal chain that is easily understood by the public and policy makers. However, this does not mean that it is immediately clear what the concept means or how it should be addressed.

Scholars and scientists in the 1970s were among the first to draw attention to the gap in awareness and policy regarding the risks that humans face from natural disasters (Interview 2.1). As described in the previous section, the epistemic community at this time was primarily made up of earth scientists, meteorologists and earthquake engineers (Hannigan 2012). Already at this point, academics were hesitant to talk about natural disasters. In their view, a disaster is not about the event itself but rather about its consequences – a stance which has not been questioned even if others rarely make the proper distinction. Reducing disaster risk is about reducing vulnerability; or, in other words, natural
hazards + social vulnerability = natural disasters (Interview 2.4; Briceño, 2015; UNDRO 1979). A key academic publication in the field of disaster risk reduction and especially for emphasizing the focus on social vulnerability, is *At Risk: Natural Hazards, People’s Vulnerability and Disasters* (Wisner et al. 2004), first published in 1994. In the introduction, the authors state that:

> Analysing disasters themselves also allows us to show why they should not be segregated from everyday living, and to show how the risks involved in disasters must be connected with the vulnerability created for many people through their normal existence. It seeks the connections between the risks people face and the reasons for their vulnerability to hazards. It is therefore trying to show how disasters can be perceived within the broader patterns of society, and indeed how analysing them in this way may provide a much more fruitful way of building policies, that can help to reduce disasters and mitigate hazards, while at the same time improving living standards and opportunities more generally.  

(Wisner et al., 2004:4)

The notion that understanding vulnerability is key to understanding the impact of hazards can also be seen in the outcomes of the Yokohama Conference which took place the same year as “At Risk” was first published. The technical committee states in the conference report that:

> It is clear that investment to address hazards, whether through prevention, early warning or mitigation strategies, is a necessary condition to reducing the impact of disasters but is not in itself sufficient. Disasters need vulnerable conditions as well as hazards to happen, and it is those causes of vulnerability which must now receive focus.  

(United Nations 1994:31)

This appreciation of the links between hazards, vulnerability and disasters prompted the initial identification of a norm gap and the formulation of the norm proposition. Disaster risk reduction is highly complex, it touches on a number of issue areas and established norms (as is further discussed in the next section), and different actors introduce their own understandings of and preferences for what the norm should entail. A tracing of the words used over time to describe the norm reflects how the content of the proposed norms has shifted. An early UN resolution, in which the IDNDR was designated, recognized “the importance of reducing the impact of natural disasters for all people” (United Nations General Assembly 1987:§1) reflecting how the discussion was still focused on reducing impact rather than reducing risk. Thereafter, under a broader umbrella of discussions on “disaster risk management”, more specific formulations of norm propositions on “natural disaster reduction” (United Nations 1994) and “disaster reduction” (UNISDR 2005) subsequently turned into “disaster risk reduction” (United Nations 2015b), signaling a greater focus on prevention and the reduction of losses.
Throughout the norm formation process, the universal implications of the norm proposition of DRR, or its moral essence, were rarely questioned. A single disastrous event, such as a tsunami, a cyclone or a flooded river can—and often does—affect more than one country (UNISDR 2005). The widely used statements that “disasters do not recognize borders” (UNISDR, 2005:5) and “responsibility for disaster risk reduction goes beyond the state” (IOM et al. 2013:5) are common messages in promoting the norm proposition of reducing disaster risk. Even though many of the measures to reduce disaster risk must be taken at the national or local level, the argument that this issue must be collectively addressed has been present since the issue emerged on the political agenda. For instance, resolution 42/169 of 1987 states that:

The concept of a global programme for natural disaster reduction is predicated on collaborative efforts among culturally and economically diverse nations, together with relevant organizations of the United Nations system and concerned national and international non-governmental organizations, including scientific and technological institutions

(United Nations General Assembly 1987, emphasis added)

In addition, the Yokohama Message, one of the resolutions adopted at the first world conference in Yokohama, affirms that:

The world is increasingly interdependent. All countries shall act in a new spirit of partnership to build a safer world based on common interests and shared responsibility to save human lives, since natural disasters do not respect borders.

(United Nations 1994:17)

These quotes illustrate an underlying understanding that tackling disaster-related destruction through risk reduction requires collective action to be effective. This perception has persisted throughout the years, and consultations leading up to the third world conference on disaster risk reduction mentioned that “new policies that promote socialization of risk reduction as ‘everybody’s job’ were identified as elements for the HFA2” (UNISDR, 2013:17). This statement implies that it is not just a responsibility at the state level—it also requires efforts from the media, local governments and the private sector (UNISDR 2013). The normative understanding that disaster risk reduction is important for everyone, and the value-laden notion that it will require solidarity to prevent major disaster-related consequences is one reason, according to the interviewees, why the Sendai Framework and its predecessors were such a success story.

Despite the inherent complexities and uncertainties regarding disaster risk reduction, over the years a common “language” on DRR has formed. This was primarily driven by UNISDR (Interviews 2.5; 2.6; 2.10) and part of this work was the “UNISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction” (UNISDR 2004,
2009b) and the “Global Assessment Reports” (United Nations 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015a). Involved actors have emphasized that this common language was vital to the acceptance process as it facilitated global negotiations on the issue. Furthermore, the common DRR language allowed stakeholders and advocates to travel to different countries and still obtain an instant understanding of their message (Interview 2.3; 2.5; 2.15).

Material collected for this case demonstrates how the content of the norm proposition has evolved over the years. A specification of the norm content was cemented incrementally through the work on the three frameworks (the Yokohama Strategy, the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction). The SFDRR represents a far more developed, precise and targeted specification of the content and in-built objectives of the norm than its predecessors, and does so through the formulation of seven global targets:

1. Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower the average per 100,000 global mortality rate in the decade 2020–2030 compared to the period 2005–2015;
2. Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower the average global figure per 100,000 in the decade 2020–2030 compared to the period 2005–2015;
3. Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030;
4. Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030;
5. Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020;
6. Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of the present Framework by 2030;
7. Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to people by 2030.

(UNISDR, 2015:§18)

The SFDRR is frequently praised by the relevant community for its unusually specific and clear goals. While some have argued that the HFA was a more groundbreaking declaration in relation to previous work on disaster risk reduction (Interview 2.5.), the SFDRR was a major leap in terms of definitions and specifications (Interview 2.2.). What happens with further developments regarding implementation and compliance of this norm, however, remains to

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28 These biannual reports, coordinated by UNISDR, brought together and analyzed research and data on disaster risk patterns and trends, and developed recommendations on avoiding risk generation and accumulation.
be seen. Individuals who are part of the UN expert group on implementing the framework have confirmed that efforts to develop indicators to measure fulfillment of these targets have been strenuous (Interview 2.2.). Furthermore, there is the question of how many of the initial 86 suggestions for indicators it would be feasible for all countries, regardless of economic strength and administrative capacity, to report on (Interview 2.2). There are also a number of related issues that will require further clarification. One such issue is the standards for measurement and assessment; another is the definition of responsibilities. The development of new knowledge on DRR is imperative if the topic is to be addressed in an adequate way, but at the same time the academic field suffers from a lack of clearly agreed methodological standards (Weichselgartner and Pigeon 2015). There is also a need for more precise standards for measuring and determining disaster risk and its alleviation of it (Interview 2.2). Regarding responsibilities, the Sendai Framework states in one of its guiding principles (e) that disaster risk reduction and management:

… requires the full engagement of all State institutions of an executive and legislative nature at national and local levels and a clear articulation of responsibilities across public and private stakeholders, including business and academia. (UNISDR 2015:13, emphasis added)

The norm proposition to reduce disaster risk is highly complex and multidimensional, which the analytical framework suggests would be likely to impede norm acceptance. When interviewees were asked how these complexities were overcome, two types of answer were given. One set of responses argued that the problem has not yet been overcome – that actors “are still struggling” (Interview 2.13) or “still crossing a bridge in terms of overcoming the complexities” (Interview 2.12). These answers imply that complexities and uncertainties have not played a decisive role in norm acceptance. The other set of responses recognized the complexities involved but argued that progress could continue, making use of the common language and terminology (discussed above) which is focused on clarifications and finding the lowest common denominator (Interview 2.5; 2.6; 2.10).

In sum, while DRR is widely considered legitimate and morally right (two features of a norm proposition that facilitate success), it is also multifaceted, complex, wide in scope and infused with a number of uncertainties. Such complexities might be expected to be an impediment to broader norm acceptance but in this case they do not seem to have had that effect. The material collected for this case indicates that one explanation for this counterintuitive finding is that a degree of norm contestation, which can help sharpen a norm (Wiener 2008) has had a positive effect. Another explanation is that despite the complexity, the dedicated efforts of UNISDR provided guidance through the creation of a common set of language and terminology. The definition, content
and implications of the norm have been increasingly clarified – even if some challenges remain as the process unfolds. A comparison between the three frameworks for disaster risk reduction (Yokohama, Hyogo and Sendai) offers a good illustration of how sequential and incremental norm clarification went hand-in-hand with increasingly formalistic agreements – with a positive impact on the norm acceptance process.

5.3. Framing

The analysis in this chapter has thus far considered the aspects of norm entrepreneurs and the characteristics of the norm itself. Both these components are expected to have some bearing on the framing of the norm proposition, that is, its linkages to other well-established values and issue-areas. The more closely the proposition is connected to politically and publicly popular norms, the more likely it is to gain acceptance. The framing of the norm proposition is also expected to have implications for the choice of venue and institutional setting, which is further discussed further in the next step of the analysis.

In the analysis of this study’s material on disaster risk reduction, two particular framing shifts of the norm proposition at hand stand out: first, the shift in focus from preparedness and response to prevention; and, second, the shift from a humanitarian issue to a development issue. In addition to these two, a third framing has also had great influence over the perception and diffusion of disaster risk reduction: the connections to climate change.

5.3.1. From preparedness and response to prevention

One of the main objectives of the norm to reduce disaster risk has been to shift the focus from addressing and mitigating the consequences of disasters to preventing hazards from turning into disasters by assessing and reducing risk. This follows closely, and in some respects overlaps with, how the content of the norm has shifted from disaster reduction to disaster risk reduction (described above). However, when comparing these parallel shifts towards risk and prevention respectively, it becomes evident that the discussion started to shift towards prevention long before the conceptual change to risk.

Already at the first world conference in Yokohama in 1994, the conference proceedings demonstrated a concern regarding the international community’s tendency to focus on response rather than prevention:

In recent years emphasis has again been placed primarily on disaster response both within the United Nations and beyond. This has slowed down the momentum of the Decade’s initial phase, based on the consensus of the importance of action before disasters strike.

(United Nations 1994:§8f)
Nonetheless, the “focus on cure” persisted throughout the 1990s, and it was not until after the establishment of UNISDR, and a few years into the new century, that stakeholders started to consider prevention the most important part of disaster management. This was consistent with a generally increasing intent within the UN to nurture a culture of prevention – in relation not only to disasters, but also to war and violence. While most actors agree that risk reduction is preferable to response, it is not always the most productive framing for getting traction and spurring action. Prevention, if successful, happens without fanfare or publicity. Several of the interviewees for this study complained that prevention does not make headlines, and that it is hard to get the public’s and the media’s attention on the majority of the work that is done to reduce disaster risk (Interviews 2.1; 2.3; 2.4). One interviewee reflected upon this saying that it is sometimes tricky to make states actually do something about disaster risk reduction since “some states would rather be the hero that helps after something happens than the unseen hero that prevents” (Interview 2.4).

The concerns raised about prevention being politically unappealing seem to be well-founded. The section on resistance shows how this aspect has fostered further uncertainty, unwillingness to act and de-prioritization. On the other hand, the reframing towards prevention has also went hand-in-hand with the reframing of disaster risk reduction as a development, rather than a humanitarian, issue – a reframing that seems to have made the norm proposition less sensitive and opened doors to broader acceptance, such as in the SDGs. This is investigated further below.

5.3.2. From a humanitarian to a development issue

The image of helping people exposed to hazards and disasters intuitively reflects humanitarian concerns. For a long time, perhaps due to the focus on response, the norm proposition under study here was primarily considered a humanitarian issue. In recent years, however, many actors have worked hard to shift the framing towards development (see for example GAR 2011 on “Redefining Development”), better echoing the focus on risk.

The material reveals a strong focus on the concept of vulnerability. In addition, the moral implications of the norm proposition are substantial, given that it is the people who are already most vulnerable in the world that are disproportionately affected by disasters (UNISDR 2005, 2012; United Nations 2015b). Wisner et al. (2004), a key academic publication in the field of disaster

29 See for example the 1999 report from the UN Secretary-General (Kofi Annan) to the General Assembly on the importance of working preventively (United Nations General Assembly 1999).
studies first published in 1994 (mentioned above), had a major influence on understandings of the disaster problematique. The authors’ main objective was to take a stand against what they called the conventional view of disasters, which held that disasters should primarily be understood as sudden events that deviate from the normal and have destructive consequences. Wisner et al. spearheaded the strand of thought that there is no such thing as natural disaster per se. Instead, disasters are the result of a combination of natural hazards and social vulnerability. As such, the consequences of disasters – and the reduction of those consequences – must not be understood in isolation but in terms of people’s vulnerability to natural hazards and the social structures that enable such vulnerability. This new understanding helped to widen the focus and make possible a new set of actions to handle disasters.

The concept of disaster risk reduction has also been imbued with humanitarian undertones, as shown in its focus on solidarity and vulnerability. Many accounts attribute the initial emergence of DRR to the field of humanitarian aid, especially in terms of the humanitarian work of the United Nations and organizations such as the Red Cross (Hannigan, 2012; Interview 2.4). A natural consequence of this was that the ISDR, on its establishment, was placed under the direct authority of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs (A/RES/54/219), where it remained for its first decade, signalling the policy area to which disaster risk reduction was connected.

While there had been efforts before the Second World Conference in Kobe to turn the focus from humanitarian affairs to development, the humanitarian framing lingered. The Indian Ocean tsunami provided unprecedented leverage to efforts to build a new framework (the HFA), but it also emphasized the humanitarian aspects of disaster risk. Nonetheless, in retrospect, the Hyogo Framework marked a turning point in the framing of the norm. The words of one interviewee illustrate this point:

With Hyogo, something interesting happened because, of course, the big political kick comes in and you have got this conference with massive, serious, important people coming – which was not expected at the beginning. But at the same time, everybody was – rightfully and understandably – so taken by the mass destruction that had happened in terms of human lives and in terms of assets, that the humanitarian sphere in Hyogo was very prominent. /…/ But at the same time, the ten years of the HFA really crystalized DRR in terms of sustainable development.

(Interview 2.12)

Thus, after the Kobe conference, in the decade connecting the HFA to the SFDRR, the focus started to turn toward development, not least as a result of the understanding of the economic aspects of DRR and the role of the private

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30 Even though the authors themselves admitted that this notion had been present in academia for decades, this publication brought the approach to the forefront.
sector. (These aspects are discussed further under the section on resistance). Overall, the material makes clear that the framing of DRR as a development question gained pace between the HFA and the SFDRRR. Wahlström has emphasized this (as mentioned above) and the inclusion in the UN SDGs strengthened this further. In September 2015, the UN followed its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by formulating and adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The connections between DRR and development were clearly cemented by the SDGs when DRR was explicitly incorporated in target 13.1 of SDG 13 on climate action. Target 13.1. sets a development target to “[s]trengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries”. The indicators for this target are: the “[n]umber of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies”; and the “[n]umber of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people”. When compared against the targets in the SFDRR, it becomes clear that on this issue the SDG has relied heavily on the norm propositions stated in the Sendai Framework.

Before moving on to discussing the connections to the issue-area of climate change, let us consider in what ways these re-framings have been important for norm development. The shifts towards prevention and development respectively unfolded largely in parallel. The material in this study – and the interviews in particular – show a perception that these re-framings better reflects the essence of the norm proposition and the objectives of pursuing it. In addition, while prevention and development reduced some political sensitivity, compared to response or humanitarian intervention, these framings also reduced some of the urgency to adopt the norm proposition and act on it. This is where the next framing comes in: the connections to climate change.

5.3.3. The connections to climate change

The third central framing of disaster risk reduction is its relation to the issue of climate change. While the connections between disaster risk reduction and climate change have become more prominent in recent years, they were, in fact, part of the discussions as early as the “International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction” (discussed above). During the IDNDR, and especially by the turn of the century, a different type of epistemic community was emerging and being given increasing space and attention. This cohort of academics was more aligned with the climate change sphere and included advocates of climate change adaptation; as such, it consisted of a broader range of scholars such as environmental scientists, geographers, public health experts and international development scholars (Hannigan 2012). Hannigan argues that even though connections to the field of climate change adaptation put the issue of DRR at risk of being absorbed into a much broader and more competitive field, this “epistemic merge” was beneficial in pushing the DRR issue because: “it opened a portal to global policy communities and practitioners that
possess far more money, political legitimacy, media attention, and public support” (Hannigan, 2012:33).

However, when climate change issues started to climb up international agendas around the Millenium, it was far from evident that a growing profile for climate change was going to be helpful for disaster risk reduction policies. The connections between climate change and disasters may be obvious in the scientific evidence, but it had been an arduous task to get a clear political statement acknowledging the fact, and the relationship was still politically sensitive. One interviewee pointed out that between 2000 and 2005, there was a strong push back from certain countries on everything related to climate change (Interview 2.6). In 2012, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a report on extreme events, which made the link between disasters and climate change (IPCC 2012). According to interview material, the report was “game changing” when it came to perceptions of the “real” drivers of disasters (Interviews 2.6; 2.11). The report was also helpful in linking disasters and climate change politically, infusing an understanding among policymakers that “we cannot only pay lip service to this anymore”, and that economies and development relied on adequate action (Interview 2.6). The evidence collected for this study confirms that the connections to the climate change area have been highly beneficial in emphasizing the need for stronger norm development on DRR. One only needs to see how climate change advocates frequently make reference to disasters to illustrate the effects of climate change.

One of the practitioners interviewed for this study pointed out the key difference in the connection between disaster risk reduction and natural catastrophes versus the relationship between disaster risk reduction and climate change: natural catastrophes in themselves are not politically sensitive, and it was against this backdrop that disaster risk reduction was initially discussed. More recently, however, disaster risk reduction has been specifically associated with climate change, which is much more politically salient and “contagious” (Interview 2.5).

The link between disaster risk reduction and climate change was further formalized in the Paris Agreement of 2015, an agreement which signalled the relative decline in the sensitivity of climate change politics. UNISDR intentionally held its Third World Conference on disaster risk reduction before COP21 in Paris, hoping to have an impact on the climate negotiations and to get DRR included in the Paris Agreement. The plan succeeded. Not only were disasters used time and again used to illustrate the problem of climate change during the negotiations, but the preamble of the Paris Agreement also welcomes “the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction” (UNFCCC 2015a: Interview 2.1).

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The framework constructed for this thesis proposes that framing, that is, links to established norms and issues, matters for norm acceptance because it directs public and political sentiment, and conditions the possible political instruments and the institutional venue responsible for the proposition, or most appropriate institution to include it in its portfolio.

A careful evaluation of the material shows how actors have actively tried to frame the norm proposition on disaster risk reduction increasingly in terms of prevention, development and climate change. These shifts and developments in framing efforts are partly a result of a better understanding and clarification of the norm but are also shaped by the surrounding political discourse. For instance, the UN at large started to move towards a greater focus on prevention around the time that UNISDR was created, and the past decade has seen a generally strong increase in discussions on climate change. Where prevention and development increased the proposition’s legitimacy by revealing some political sensitivity, at the same time they somewhat decreased the sense of urgency in the norm proposition and made it less appealing to those policymakers who wanted to be “saviors” rather than “preventers”. However, the increasingly stronger connections to climate change helped to bring some of that urgency back into the debate. These linkages proved a double-edged sword. For instance, while the linkages to prevention depoliticized the issue, they also reduced the amount of political attention. On the other hand, when DRR was increasingly framed as a climate change matter, it was linked to controversial questions – but ultimately included in a broader, very well-established setting as it joined climate change issues on the international agenda.

As the next section demonstrates, these framings of the norm proposition have also determined the venues in which the proposition has been taken up. In this case, DRR had the unusual benefit of having an institutional setting (UNISDR) specifically mandated to promote it, while the framing in terms of development and the linkages to climate change opened doors to other international venues such as the SDGs and the UNFCCC. Both these factors seem to have been fundamental to its broader acceptance outside the immediate disaster and risk community.

5.4. Venue

The theoretical framework suggests that an institutional home and a suitable and solely devoted setting for discussing the norm proposition are imperative for norm acceptance. In this case, after the establishment of a decade for disaster risk reduction, the initiation of a UN secretariat quickly followed. The secretariat initially consisted of only a handful of people. To this day, it remains one of the smallest bodies of the UN. Nonetheless, since its establishment UNISDR has functioned as an institutional home, a coordinator, a norm entrepreneur and a norm driver. As UNISDR is specifically devoted to the
issues around disaster risk reduction, it has also provided a natural setting for
discussions and negotiations on the Yokohama, Hyogo and Sendai frame-
works. Unlike many other climate norm propositions, DRR has thus not had
to depend on being heard and finding space in the crowded and competitive
environment of the UNFCCC negotiations.

The ISDR was the successor arrangements of the IDNDR. It was estab-
lished by General Assembly Resolution 54/219 and further consolidated in
Resolution 56/195. The first resolution states that the General Assembly “en-
dorses the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish an inter-agency task
force and inter-agency secretariat for disaster reduction” (§4) while the second
“[s]tresses that the inter-agency secretariat for the Strategy should be consol-
idated and enhanced to perform its functions effectively, in particular to serve
as the focal point in the United Nations system for the coordination of disaster
reduction” (§6). The secretariat was then commissioned to assist the Secre-
tary-General in reviewing the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World (United
Nations General Assembly 2003). The General Assembly later convened a
World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe 2005, where this review
was discussed (United Nations General Assembly 2004).

There were two main types of forum for discussions and negotiations
within the institutional structures of the IDNDR and later the UNISDR: the
World Conferences, thus far assembled in Yokohama, Kobe and Sendai; and
the Global Platforms. The Global Platforms were introduced in 2006 as a suc-
cessor mechanism of the inter-agency task force for disaster risk reduction.
The platforms have been held every two years since 2007 (except in 2015
when it was supplanted by the World Conference in Sendai), with the objec-
tives of overseeing and assessing the implementation of the global agreements
and providing a forum for dialogue and exchange. The platforms are not ex-
clusive to state leaders and politicians, but also include leaders from the pri-
vate sector, science and civil society.31 The platforms emerged following the
adoption of the HFA, and can be considered one of the more successful innov-
ations of the HFA process. The type of inclusiveness that the platforms entail –
with member states not necessarily at the center – has proved an important
aspect in the implementation process and the work leading up to the SFDRR,
not least because of the attempts to reach common understandings across sec-
tors and the enormous preparations conducted for Sendai in order to produce
a solid document (Interviews 2.6, 2.8, 2.11). But some accounts also point to
the platforms as a challenge to the norm development process, at least initially.
Member states were not familiar with the format and became uncomfortable
with having all the stakeholders in the same venue during the plenary discus-
sions (Interview 2.11).

2017.
Apart from functioning as a central norm entrepreneur and from actively trying to converge stakeholders around a common language on disaster risk reduction (both aspects described above), UNISDR has also actively provided technical support and scientific evidence to stakeholders through the Global Assessment Reports (GAR). These reports comprise peer reviewed papers and research, and were published every other year between 2009 and 2015. Each GAR was given a specific focus: poverty (United Nations 2009), development (United Nations 2011), the business sector (United Nations 2013) and governance of disaster risk (United Nations 2015a). In this way, UNISDR has not only provided a platform for discussion but also actively nurtured specific aspects of the norm.

The analysis of this factor does not suggest that the existence and functioning of a venue in itself produces broad acceptance. Nonetheless, this case still suggests that it has been an important facilitator. For instance, a venue with a summit series (such as the global platforms and the world conferences) means that there is always a mandate and a forum to keep normative discussions going. That said, this does not necessarily mean that these discussions will reach or influence a larger political audience than those directly involved in the UNISDR summits. For instance, before 2005, the case of DRR was a low-level political issue with small delegations attending and engaging in normative discussions. This completely changed after the Indian Ocean tsunami, when all of a sudden DRR became a priority issue at the top of the agenda, which laid the ground for broader acceptance (discussed in detail below). On the other hand, a great advance in norm acceptance could not have been achieved – or would not have happened so quickly after 2005 – without the already existing institutional structures to cater for norm developments. This chain of events suggests that venue – as understood in this thesis – is an essential building block in norm acceptance but not enough in itself.

The analysis also shows that through the world conferences and the global platforms, discussions and negotiations on DRR have had a venue that has been totally devoted to such issues. In this setting, DRR could be addressed without having to compete with a broad range of other issues, as it would have done if it relied solely on norm acceptance within the frames of the UNFCCC.

While UNISDR, together with its global platforms and conferences, has been essential to developing and gaining support for the norm as well as for formalizing it into agreements, the norm’s subsequent recognition in the Paris Agreement and the SDGs paved the way for its broader international acceptance. The doors to these venues were opened by the linkages and framing of the norm proposition in terms of climate change and development. This dual venue adoption seems to have been important for both targeted and broad norm acceptance.
5.5. Resistance

Implicit or explicit resistance counteracts the agency of norm entrepreneurs and might prolong the process of norm acceptance or halt it completely. This factor thus assesses the level of resistance (if any) to the norm proposition and the forms such resistance takes. What becomes clear regarding this factor in the case of disaster risk reduction, is that there were only minor degrees of conflict and organized resistance to its emergence of disaster risk reduction as a global norm.

A common refrain in the secondary literature and the interview material is the widespread and relatively consensual appeal of the normative underpinnings of DRR. Glantz (2015), for instance, when writing about the conference in Sendai, argues that “the spirit behind the WCDRR\(^\text{32}\) process seems to have been universal” (p. 206, footnote added). The interviews conducted for this study underscore this perception. The interviewees were asked to reflect on the reasons why the international community was able to come to an agreement regarding disaster risk reduction. Almost universally, the first and most spontaneous answer was that “no one could be against this” (Interview 2.3), that “everyone thinks this is good” (Interview 2.5) and that “everyone thinks that disaster consequences are unacceptable” (Interview 2.1). One interviewee even described it as common sense: “everyone understands that it is better to brush the teeth than to drill a cavity” (Interview 2.5). Other interviewees attributed the successful outcome to the fact that disaster risk reduction is in the interests of all states and to the recognition of increasing interdependencies (Interviews 2.4; 2.10). Almost every state has been affected or will be affected by disasters in some way (Interview 2.4). These statements all indicate that there was a low level of resistance to the norm proposition. That does not mean, however, that the norm acceptance process unfolded without any conflict or resistance whatsoever.

For instance, interviewees who were present during the preparations for and negotiations before and during the conference in Sendai mentioned that the conflicts surrounding and infusing the negotiations were concerned not primarily with the actual content of the agreement, but with other issues that are constantly present in the international policy sphere. Such issues can be linked to responsibility and financing issues,\(^\text{33}\) North-South tensions and sensitivities regarding climate change, such as whether climate change leads to

\(^{32}\) World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR)

\(^{33}\) In essence, this conflict was over the fact that financial resources must be increased in order to fulfill the agreement. How much each state should contribute therefore became a point of discussion, which also tapped into the question of the responsibility of each state for doing this (Interview 2.5). In addition, and contrary to what one might initially think, a number of developing countries were hesitant regarding the financing demands. There was a fear that donor countries would attempt to conflate climate, catastrophe and humanitarian aid with the result that the total amount of aid would be reduced (Interview 2.3).
an increasing number of natural catastrophes. Last but not least, there were debates about the scope of the framework – such as whether it should include conflict, health,\footnote{This took place shortly after the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa.} technical disasters, and crime and terrorism for instance (Interviews 2.1; 2.3; 2.5; 2.10).

Indeed, there were two primary reasons for the types of conflicts in the discussions at the creation of the Sendai Framework. The first was the fact that the conference in Sendai was placed sequentially first out of the four large international summits to be held in 2015. It was thus used as a way to “test the waters” for more difficult discussions, and decisions that were to be made in subsequent meetings, especially on the 2030 development agenda and the SDGs in New York and at COP 21 in Paris (Interview 2.1, 2.11). At the same time, however, the timing aspect helped to elevate the political status of the discussions in Sendai (Interview 2.11). Another reason for conflict stemmed from the fact that much of the draft declaration had already been negotiated by technical experts at preparatory meetings in Geneva, prior to the conference. This created misunderstandings and frustration when the conference began, as state delegations arrived to take over the negotiations and were not completely familiar with all the twist and turns that had taken place prior to the conference. Some conflicts that had already been settled in principle re-emerged when the final negotiations started (Interview 2.3).

As discussed in the theoretical framework (chapter 3), scholars have shown that contestation is a natural and even necessary part of norm evolution as it helps to clarify the norm proposition and to reach consensus (see for example Wiener, 2008, 2014). However, too much contestation or contestation over too long a period – especially if the focus of the dispute is on the desirability of the norm as such rather than its content – may lead to resistance to its broader adoption.

The empirical material finds a generally low level of resistance regarding disaster risk reduction, but a few indications of tension can be identified in the process. The first evidence was in the academic debate between the focus on large, natural events as disasters in themselves versus a focus on social vulnerability as the key ingredient that turns natural hazards into disasters (Hannigan 2012; Perry 2017; Wisner et al. 1994). According to Hannigan (2012), there was also a tension between the initial epistemic community (consisting of earthquake engineers and meteorologists) and the subsequent epistemic community (which was more multidisciplinary in nature with a greater proximity to the policy sphere). This suggests that while the initial group of researchers put the norm proposition on the political agenda, the latter had more influence over policymakers when the issue became known to the broader public. Margareta Wahlström has indicated that this marginalization was overcome when the initial epistemic community was re-invited to participate in the work leading up to HFA2. The link to the sensitive policy area of
climate change also at certain points in time resulted in a reluctance to tackle climate-related norms politically.

That said, the material also highlights intensive efforts to achieve consensus on these issues, around both the HFA and the SFDRR. Not least, this consensus was a result of regional and global consultations preceding the drafting processes and the conferences, which created a supportive atmosphere underlying the discussions (Interview 2.1.). Outspoken resistance was fairly rare and, most importantly, existing conflicts and resistance were overcome. The HFA and the SFDRR are often described as the result of consensus. In the conference proceedings from the Kobe Conference, Marco Ferrari, chairman of the “Main Committee”, stated that the outcome documents from the conference were: “the result of a considerable process of consultation, deliberations and consensus building. There have been contributions from a wide range of stakeholders that have been taken into account. All these have led to this agreed collective efforts” (UNISDR, 2005:128). Ferrari continued: “In the drafting process we dealt with numerous issues, some of which were politically sensitive and on a few we could reach consensus only thanks to the hard work and good will of all those involved” (UNISDR, 2005:129).

Apart from some definitional debates concerning the focus and scope of the norm proposition, outspoken resistance to disaster risk reduction has been mild. Nonetheless, the norm proposition has still had to compete with other issues on a crowded international agenda in order to be established. Indeed, de-prioritization and salience in relation to other issues might have been a bigger threat to norm acceptance in this case, rather than resistance per se. When one of the interviewees was asked about resistance to DRR, he described why short-term political interests might lead to inaction:

I think resistance is probably an inaccurate term. Apathy maybe, or just simply de-prioritization. When you are dealing with an issue that at its heart has a coefficient of uncertainty – it may not happen, or it may not happen for a long time – when you are dealing with government systems and political machinery that functions on a four-year administrative cycle, getting a government to think further ahead is quite hard. And there are many other pressing concerns for the executive. Do you take out an extra 5 billion dollars’ worth of investment out of the health sector, to make sure that your existing infrastructure is resilient for a seismic event that is probable but not certain? /…/ It is not an easy sell to politicians wanting to be re-elected.

(Interview 2.11)

Policymakers thus have a hard time justifying the financing of disaster risk reduction measures over other sectors of the welfare system, and, as is been mentioned above, some stakeholders find it more politically appealing to appear as a “savior” after a disaster has struck than to focus on prevention. The kind of policymakers mentioned here thus remind us of the type of opponents or “antipreneurs” who might well support the norm proposition in principle.
but still take actions that point in another direction (as suggested in chapter 3). GAR 2011 draws a similar conclusion as the quote above:

Political and economic imperatives for disaster risk reduction remain elusive. Individuals tend to discount the value of future loss, and as a consequence are unwilling to invest today for a safer tomorrow. Politicians with short electoral horizons may be even less inclined.

(United Nations 2011)

Even though investments in the future are more difficult for politicians to pursue, the increasing knowledge on how immense economic losses from disasters are and how they can be substantially reduced by pre-emptive measures has clearly served to reduce resistance. The HFA contains some sweeping economic statements, but in the years leading up to further norm settlement at Sendai there was an increased emphasis on developing economic arguments. An information note intended to serve as guidance for discussions at the first Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2007 was specifically targeted to encourage participants to consider the costs and benefits of disaster risk reduction (UNISDR 2007). The info note is one of only three such discussion documents at the platform. This shows that UNISDR clearly desired stakeholders to recognize the cost-benefit arguments inherent in DRR and that it saw potential in this aspect in terms of gaining traction and increasing political will. It not only states that “investments in DRR can generate high economic returns” (p. 4, emphasis in original) but also that:

Decision making in international development contexts is heavily influenced by economic and financial considerations. Investments in DRR must compete for limited public and private sources with a myriad of other potential development investment opportunities. Unless the economic and financial case for such investments can be demonstrated, proponents of DRR will lack the basic information required for informed financial decision making. As a result, estimates documenting the economic costs and benefits of investments in DRR are of fundamental importance for decision making.

(UNISDR 2007:5, emphasis in original)

In parallel with the states’ increased understanding of the economic value of investing in DRR, the private sector also became increasingly involved. Its involvement was partly a result of the active efforts of UNISDR as well as joint responses from the private sector themselves (Interviews 2.8; 2.11).

35 The other two information notes concerned the linkages between DRR, climate change and development, and urban and megacity risk (UNISDR 2007).
36 Several initiatives involving international institutions and the private sector emerged simultaneously. The most important were the Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG), the Private Sector Partnership (PSP) and the R!SE Initiative. Eventually, in 2015 these created a joint alliance: the Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies (ARISE), see https://www.unisdr.org/partners/private-sector, accessed 26 March 2018.
Having the private sector “on board” (that is, having their initial resistance reduced) and increasingly aware of their role in a disaster resilient society (often as “risk creators”) is considered a major reason why DRR was able to move towards broader acceptance and more precise norm establishment in the Sendai Framework (Interviews 2.3; 2.8; 2.10; 2.11).

A comparison between the Hyogo and Sendai frameworks reflects the increased emphasis on economic arguments. A cursory text analysis shows that the SFDRR mentions the words “economic” or “cost” more than twice as much as the HFA. Moreover, the SFDRR demonstrates greater dedication to cost-effective disaster risk reduction by stating that “Reducing disaster risk is a cost-effective investment in preventing future losses” (§3); by having the reduction of “direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030” (§18c) as one of its global targets and by having “Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience” (§29–31) as one of its four priorities.

A large part of the interview material in this case highlights how the increased understanding of the economic benefits of preventively investing in disaster risk reduction has been a key driver in substantially decreasing political resistance to truly adopting this norm, and thus facilitating the movement of the norm from a proposition to acceptance.

Having assessed the first five factors of the analytical framework, we now turn to the last factor in which the influence and importance of contingencies as well as the joint effect of the previous factors and context are illuminated.

5.6. Accounting for contingencies

A central goal of this thesis is to investigate the explanatory value of contingencies as a factor in explaining norm acceptance. Chapter 3, this dynamic whereby a contingent event – such as an external shock, political alterations or a new technology – substantially heightens the salience of a norm proposition and triggers a period of potential normative change, that is, a leap forward in norm acceptance. Such periods align closely with what the policy literature refers to as windows of opportunity (Kingdon 1995). However, the understanding of the influence of contingencies in this thesis builds on and develops existing approaches, and stresses the importance of coherence with other components of norm emergence. The window is more likely to be productive in terms of norm acceptance if the norm proposition has reached a certain “level of maturity”, if norm entrepreneurs are prepared and coordinated, and if there are institutional platforms and feasible solutions already in place for stakeholders to act on. In other words, other explanatory factors must be fulfilled for a contingency to have a strong effect.

A tracing and analysis of the process in this case shows that norm acceptance has been substantially aided by contingencies – the 2004 Indian
Ocean tsunami in particular. However, as GAR 2011 points out: “Large disasters can create a social demand for risk reduction, but that does not always translate into sustained engagement” (United Nations 2011:11). This section shows how the intervention of contingencies in this norm emergence process has led to windows of opportunity and – through a confluence with beneficial conditions in other components of the framework – been subsequently translated into sustained engagement and norm acceptance.

Before we examine the events in 2004–2005 in detail, it is worth mentioning that the material reveals a number of other notable points where external interventions served norm advancement in the area of DRR. Examples of such points are the presentation by Frank Press at the 1984 World Conference on Earthquake Engineering (Toki 1988), the earthquake in Mexico City in 1985 (as well as the two large aftershocks in 1985 and 1986) and the deadly consequences of the 1985 volcanic eruptions in Colombia (Interview 2.14) which led to the norm on disaster risk receiving an unusually fast institutionalization in the UN through the establishment of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. In another example, as the IDNDR was drawing to a close at the end of the 1990s, the international community was at a crossroads trying to determine whether to continue – and further institutionalize – the work on disaster reduction that had been initiated during the decade. At this point, advocates within the IDNDR managed to persuade stakeholders to continue the work on disaster reduction by establishing UNISDR, rather than letting the norm proposition die with the end of the international decade. This was assisted by the serious El Niño event of 1997–98 and Hurricane Mitch in 1998, both of which were actively linked to prevention efforts by norm entrepreneurs (Interviews 2.1; 2.13).

All these points moved developments forward through smaller facilitating windows of opportunity. Nonetheless, one particular point in time stands out as more defining than any other: the co-occurrence of the Indian Ocean tsunami and the Second World Conference in Kobe. In December 2004, an earthquake in the Indian Ocean led to a tsunami which took the lives of over 200,000 people and resulted in immense material losses. At the time, the UNISDR and the disaster risk community were finalizing the preparations for the Second World Conference in Kobe, which was due to take place only a few weeks later. In an instant, the conference went from a fairly peripheral event to the most prioritized political event of the year. The tsunami was not just an external “shock” to the process. Through conditions that are discussed below, it was the opening of a window of opportunity that was seized upon by sufficiently aware actors. The short-term outcome was the Hyogo Framework for Action but the window also triggered a “norm cascade” (to use the language of the norm life cycle) that led to the further establishment of the norm in the Sendai Framework 10 years later. This section draws on the material to show how this opportunity was seized and why the window was productive.
In the developments on DRR, disasters of different kinds clearly aided normative developments. However, the Indian Ocean tsunami was on an unprecedented scale in terms of loss of human life and the destruction of material assets. Moreover, the tsunami also affected a large number of countries – not only those directly flooded, but also those with a large number of tourists in the area.

The impact and dominance of the tsunami at the Kobe conference is clearly demonstrated in the conference report (UNISDR 2005). The publication is dedicated to the victims of and people affected by the tsunami, every foreword and preface mentions its impact and it is referred to throughout the document. These references to the tsunami do not just take the form of condolences. There are also explicit statements on its impact on the issue’s salience and on governments’ political will.

For instance, Jan Egeland, who was Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs at the time, stated that the losses from the tsunami “highlighted dramatically the importance of risk awareness, early warning, vulnerability reduction, and sustained attention to disaster and risk management. The conference in Kobe assumed a significance that few had predicted only weeks before” (UNISDR, 2005:1). Sálvano Briceño, at the time director of the UN Inter-Agency secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (another description for UNISDR) called the conference “timely” and said that the tsunami was “a dramatic shock to Governments and communities alike, reminding them of their vulnerability and of the importance of acting to reduce disaster risk wherever people are exposed to hazards” (UNISDR, 2005:5). In a video statement to the conference, the then UN Secretary-general, Kofi Annan, stated that the tsunami tragedy had made the conference topical and timely, and that the international community was already seeing an unprecedented global response (UNISDR, 2005:7). Finally, Marco Ferrari, Chairman of the Drafting Committee and the Main Committee, which drafted the outcome documents from the conference – described how the tsunami suddenly drew the world’s attention to this subject just as they were right in the middle of the drafting process and how the declaration itself reflected “the political will to pay increasing attention to disaster reduction” (UNISDR, 2005:128-129).

In general, the material gathered for this study provides overwhelming evidence that the tsunami and the subsequent Kobe conference were, together, as a defining moment in the history of the norm’s movement from proposition to being widely accepted. In an interview, Margareta Wahlström explained:

The tsunami brought home to people around the world that even though they were geographically distant, they could be touched. Even in some European countries, the tsunami had a significant impact on Governments’ efforts to build much better crisis management systems.

(UN News Centre 2009)
Wahlström continued:

It [the tsunami] was also something that happened in the media, in people’s face. The enormous tragedy that happened there brought home that there are many things that can, and must, be done. And immediately after that, the Kobe conference happened, which generated the Hyogo Framework for Action. It wasn’t planned, obviously, but it became the impetus for a much stronger strategic framework than probably otherwise would have emerged.

(UN News Centre 2009)

One of the interviewees stated that “[t]he Indian Ocean tsunami completely twisted, regrettably in a positive way, the type of attention that was given to this issue.” (Interview 2.12). Another interviewee described how he was appointed the only representative to the Kobe conference of his employer at the time – an international political institution. He explained how for a long time had he tried to convince this institution to focus more on disasters in development terms rather than humanitarian terms, and that it would be beneficial to invest time and resources in how to handle disasters in the future. He continued:

Let’s just say that we may have sown fertile ground for when weeks before the Kobe conference in 2005, the Indian Ocean tsunami hit. This of course catapulted the whole agenda into the political stratosphere. And the delegation of which I was the sole member at that time was suddenly transformed into a delegation of 21 people. //....// So it suddenly had critical currency. Only because you had this huge large-scale catastrophe. So that was an interesting lesson learned for us all, saying that you can provide persuasive arguments but really, until they feel the tangible consequences of not having made an attempt to try understand the management of risk and it manifests in such tragic loss of life and the enormous large-scale losses, it is difficult to gain traction at the political level.

(Interview 2.11)

This confluence of events was incredibly timely, but several sets of antecedent conditions – founded in the other factors of the framework – were also instrumental in the fact that the window led to a productive outcome.

The first set of conditions concerns the norm entrepreneurs and their work. An analysis of the conditions present in January 2005, shows why and how developments coincided at this specific point in time and thus opened a window of opportunity. However, a window of opportunity is nothing but a fertile moment. The window must be strategically seized in order to produce a norm cascade (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998) and an outcome of norm acceptance (Kingdon 1995). In this case, entrepreneurs were ready to seize the moment and push the issue forward using several strategies, one of which was to understand the possible implications of the event for the Kobe conference and
make use of them (Interviews 2.11; 2.13). Another was to convince the private sector to realize the importance of contributing to DRR (Interview 2.8) and a third was to keep strengthening the scientific evidence, for instance through the GARs (Interview 2.7).

The second set of conditions concerns the characteristics of the norm proposition and how external shocks made the problem seem more pressing. The analysis has already shown that disaster risk reduction is both wide in scope and quite complex. It also entails an element of uncertainty, not so much over causal pathways (e.g. consequences and impacts) as when and where possible disasters will occur. However, by the time of the Kobe conference, UNISDR had already begun to work on terminology and a common language. The gaps in knowledge and management had already been identified during the IDNDR (Interview 2.6) and the 2004 report “Living with risk” (UNISDR 2004), which is widely regarded as a key text in shaping developments, included a terminology on the basic concepts of disaster risk reduction. At the time of the second world conference, the substance and meaning of the norm proposition had been clarified and specified in enough detail for stakeholders to be able to understand it and regard it as legitimate. The norm proposition was thus sufficiently mature when an external shock – one of the deadliest natural disasters in modern history – hit and dramatically increased the urgency of the problem. The Indian Ocean tsunami affected people from many parts of the world because some of the affected areas, such as the Khao Lak region in Thailand, are major tourist spots. The tsunami and its effects shot to the top of the political and public consciousness.

The third set of conditions concerns venues, their institutional frames and their available tools. In the years preceding the second world conference, between 2000 and 2005, UNISDR was created and the institutional settings were established. When the tsunami hit, DRR had a natural institutional home within which negotiations could take place without having to compete with a broad range of different issues (as was the case for instance within the UNFCCC for instance). This set of conditions also includes available policy instruments and solutions as well as accumulated knowledge and technology related to the issue. In parallel – and intertwined with – the maturation of the norm, the UNISDR had been working hard with Japan and other actors to get a draft declaration in place for the conference in Kobe. This meant that when the tsunami happened and the spotlight was turned on the international community and state representatives, policymakers already had an instrument at hand to act upon and an ensuing event – the conference in Kobe – to take up the issue. These conditions made the draft of the Hyogo Framework for Action an appealing and obvious option for state representatives to enhance their legitimacy in their home countries and towards their international colleagues by being seen as taking action.

The terminology has since been subject for ongoing updates.
The urgency of the norm proposition was maintained in the 10 years between the HFA and the SFDRR by regular iterations of devastating disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Sandy, the Port-au-Prince earthquake and the Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami. This heightened salience, and the favorable framing and attentive entrepreneurship paved the way for a broader adoption through the Paris Agreement and the SDGs in 2015.

Taken together, the human and economic consequences of natural disasters have been made exceptionally clear to policymakers by large-scale catastrophes such as hurricanes, earthquakes and tsunamis. These events made the causalities of catastrophes and their consequences evident, and it became evident that it was unacceptable to avoid addressing disaster risk at the international level. Moreover, it became clear that the measures taken were helpful, which inspired further action (Interview 2.1).

The material collected for this study makes clear that the timely combination of the Indian Ocean tsunami and the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe formed a key confluence of events that opened up for broad prioritization – and eventual acceptance – of disaster risk reduction as a norm in the international community. In this case, it seems clear that the tsunami offered an undeniable boost in salience and that – together with other factors already in place (such as a defined group of entrepreneurs and institutional arrangements) as well as more factors aligning (such as the increased connection to climate change and development, further clarification and conceptualization of the norm and the parallel decrease in resistance and de-prioritization) – this produced a combined effect that led to a broad norm acceptance. One aspect was that resistance was ameliorated and the “passive” group of stakeholders became engaged in the norm, producing a norm cascade as described by Finnemore and Sikkink (1998). The window of opportunity that opened at this time was seized by advocates in order to step up their work on promoting DRR which eventually led to a cementation of the norm in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

5.7. Conclusions on the case of disaster risk reduction

This chapter has studied the norm proposition of disaster risk reduction as a way to probe the plausibility of the analytical framework of this thesis. The analysis has reached the following key findings.

The analysis confirms that using the standard approach (the norm life cycle, for instance) to explaining norm evolution is not sufficient to understand this case. Among other things, this approach would not have provided a sufficiently detailed account of the norm emergence stage. More importantly, it would not have captured the influence of some of the most critical aspects of norm acceptance or how different factors interact. While other standard approaches may provide helpful insights into some developments in this case,
they cannot fully account for why the norm acceptance process took the pathway it did.

One such critical aspect is contingencies and the analysis gives further strength to the proposed importance of this component. More importantly, the analysis suggests how contingencies must align with norm-specific factors in order to facilitate norm acceptance. The case of disaster risk reduction shows how a confluence of events and favorable conditions have had such a strong influence over developments that it is reasonable to say that the outcome cannot be adequately understood without acknowledging it. What was a fairly unknown technical policy question suddenly rocketed to the top of the international agenda and relatively swiftly became broadly accepted, as demonstrated by powerful new international agreements for example. Empirical observation of the various windows of opportunity also confirms the plausibility of the claim of the present thesis – that the joint and dynamic effect with the other factors mattered. While many opportunities arose to push the issue further, only one, at the right time, served to advance acceptance in a critical way.

In addition, a few other interesting results stand out. One is that disaster risk reduction had a devoted and mandated venue from a very early stage. Another finding is counterintuitive – that disaster risk reduction has had an unusually successful and quick acceptance process despite the fact that the norm is highly complex and wide in scope. The conclusion is that these last two aspects hang together. Complexity issues were overcome by the early institutionalization and the active work of that institution (UNISDR) to create a common conceptual language around the reduction of disaster risk.

An evaluation of each factor in the framework is summarized in Table 6. A longer discussion of the most central conclusions drawn from this case analysis is set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>UNISDR as the key norm entrepreneur has functioned as both advocate and expert, and has even provided a venue for discussions on the norm proposition. Furthermore, entrepreneurs have managed to recognize windows of opportunity to further push for DRR.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The norm itself</td>
<td>Even though the norm proposition to reduce disaster risk is highly complex and infused with a large degree of uncertainty, this does not seem to have been a particular impediment to acceptance (contrary to theoretical expectations). Through targeted efforts by norm entrepreneurs to create a common understanding, the negative effect of the complexities was ameliorated. In addition, the proposition has been perceived as legitimate and a subject of universal concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing</td>
<td>The norm proposition of DRR has made two major shifts in framing: first, from preparedness and response to prevention; and, second, from a humanitarian issue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to a development issue. In addition, DRR has been strongly connected to climate change. While the connections to other norms and issue areas have been sensitive at some points, framing has also been helpful as it has contributed to a greater focus on and clarification of the content and objectives of the norm, and opened doors to broader forums such as the UNFCCC and the SDGs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>The summits organized by the UNISDR, especially the world conferences and the global platforms, provided an institutional setting fully devoted to discussing, negotiating and addressing DRR. This condition seems to have had a strong bearing on facilitating norm acceptance.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resistance</td>
<td>There has been little resistance to DRR as such. Although the proposition has been shown to struggle with de-prioritization, conflicts within the SFDRR negotiations have concerned external matters. The generally positive attitude to DRR has had a facilitating effect on norm acceptance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingencies</td>
<td>The combination of the Kobe Conference and the Indian Ocean tsunami triggered a crucial window of opportunity that made the Hyogo Framework for Action much more salient and was the seedbed for developments leading up to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The occurrence of these contingencies and the seizing of this opportunity had a critical significance for norm acceptance in this case.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Evaluation of factors in the case of DRR

The overall conclusion of this plausibility probe is that the proposed framework improves understanding of how norm emergence works and the mechanisms that lead to norm acceptance. It also seems plausible that the component of contingencies and windows of opportunity adds new explanatory leverage to norm evolution. However, the other variables also matter and it seems as if it is the precise alignment of contingencies and the other factors that is particularly helpful to norm advancement. The other factors necessarily need to be present and to have reached a certain maturity when external events (i.e. the contingency) occur to open a window – and the more factors present, the better. Sometimes, however, the intervention of the external event may also help to fulfill some factors and make them align. The point is that there needs to be a joint effect of the different factors during the window of opportunity.

In the case of DRR, it is important to understand that while the norm proposition had been relatively institutionalized within a smaller circle already in the 1990s by the Yokohama Strategy and the establishment of UNISDR, it was not until the period between 2005–2015 that it became subject to broader recognition and acceptance. While we can never determine exactly how the

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norm evolution process would have unfolded if the contingencies and preconditions of 2004–2005 had not coalesced in the way they did, the case analysis here provides ample evidence to suggest that a contingency gave the norm proposition the leverage to propel and raise it to a broadly accepted norm. Without this component, it seems reasonable to believe that the Hyogo Framework and its subsequent work would have continued to be of concern to only a limited group of civil servants and state representatives and that it would have remained at the periphery of the political agenda for a considerable time. Even though natural disasters would have attracted short-term attention, it is not certain that another time period would have presented the same joint conditions in order open a window of opportunity that would have produced the effect on norm diffusion that was seen in this case.

In terms of the successful outcome of norm acceptance, it should be stressed that it was not the coincidence of the Indian Ocean tsunami and the conference in Kobe in itself that resulted in norm acceptance, but that this immense boost in salience opened a window leading to acceptance. This critical window had such a strong influence on the outcome of developments because it occurred at a time when norm emergence had reached a certain level of maturity, and the timing was just right for the following reasons. The norm proposition had had time to mature, in the sense that it had been clarified enough for stakeholders to understand essentially what it was about. A venue – in the form of UNISDR and its world conferences and platforms – had been established, which offered a foundation for focused discussions to address the norm. A group of norm entrepreneurs, spearheaded by the UNISDR secretariat, was devoted, prepared and had a platform that gave them access to policy makers and, most importantly, a sufficient number of individual norm entrepreneurs recognized the prospects that came with the tsunami in order to turn the spotlight on the already arranged conference in Kobe. In addition, the large group of stakeholders who had remained relatively passive or distant up until this point were now set in motion.

Indeed, the pre-planned conference in Kobe was one of the main reasons that the window of opportunity could be seized and utilized to advance the norm proposition. For state representatives, the conference and the prepared draft represented a readily available solution and a way to demonstrate instant capacity to take action. Some state leaders even expressed surprise that UNISDR was able to get the conference together so quickly (Interview 2.13), showing that much of the international community was unaware of the work already done on DRR. The statement also illustrates how the norm proposition instantly rose from the political periphery to the top of the agenda.

Another very important aspect is that, through a number of factors, the window stayed open for a substantial period of time. Apart from the fact that entrepreneurs recognized the opportunity to step up their work and keep pushing for broader acceptance, consecutive large-scale disasters (such as the Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Sandy, the Haiti earthquake and the Great East Japan
earthquake) ensured that the urgency was maintained. Additional urgency, keeping salience at a high level, was added by the growing scientific evidence on climate change, and its trajectories and consequences. In the period after the Hyogo Framework for Action was adopted, more actors were convinced to take part in the discussions on DRR and in the consultation leading up to HFA2, which eventually became the Sendai Framework. The material shows that the inclusion of the private sector had an especially strong importance for broader acceptance of the norm (Interview 2.8), especially through its positive influence on resistance and de-prioritization. On top of that, building on the interest raised for disaster risk reduction at the Kobe conference, entrepreneurs managed to further strengthen stakeholders’ concerns by highlighting the economic losses that came from disasters and how governments could economically benefit from learning how to reduce the impacts of such disasters in advance (Interview 2.3; 2.6; 2.7).

A particular variable – apart from contingencies – that stands out in the case of disaster risk reduction is the early existence of a fully devoted venue in which UN discussions and negotiations on the norm proposition could take place – first within the IDNDR and later through UNISDR. The original task of UNISDR was to coordinate UN efforts and discussions on the reduction of disasters and risk. However, the case analysis here shows that it has not only functioned as an organizer of conferences and platforms, but also played an essential role as norm entrepreneur. Apart from spreading knowledge about and promoting disaster risk reduction, one of UNISDR:s most important activities was to actively work on a “common language” regarding terminology and technical information. The analysis conducted here suggests that these efforts to unify concepts were one of the main reasons why such a complex and broad norm proposition as disaster risk reduction did not encounter the impediments that would have theoretically been expected in terms of norm clarity and content. These aspects proved especially important in facilitating advancement of norm acceptance during windows of opportunity.

Political phenomena are highly complex and all such developments must be contextualized. The quality of a single component would never provide sufficient explanation for the outcome in a case of norm emergence. Contingencies, and the way suggested in the present thesis to understand and analyze them, offer an extension of previous knowledge on norm evolution in that they provide a holistic – but analytically precise – tool for explaining norm acceptance. Furthermore, the analysis shows that the other factors in the framework were also helpful, and even essential, but none of them were adequate in themselves to fully explain norm acceptance.

In sum, this chapter has tested the utility of the framework proposed in this thesis and largely confirmed its theoretical expectations. In particular, the case study on DRR has firmly established that the addition of contingencies and windows of opportunity can indeed improve the explanatory leverage of outcomes. In fact, the results from this case study show that norm acceptance is
heavily shaped by contingencies, and that such processes cannot be understood without assessing them.

Chapter 6 uses the same analytical framework to understand another case of norm emergence – that of protection for climate-induced migrants. Like the case of disaster risk reduction, it is a proposition that has high stakes for many people, and a requirement for international collective action in order to be effective. It is also the type of norm proposition that might be expected to be subject to the intervention of external events. Unlike disaster risk reduction, however, the proposed norm of international protection for climate-induced migration has failed to gain broad acceptance. Chapter 6 investigates why and in so doing, reveals complementary information about the plausibility of the theoretical framework.
6. Protection for climate-induced migration

Chapter 5 examined the case of disaster risk reduction to gauge the plausibility of the framework created in this thesis. A key finding was that contingencies and windows of opportunities, particularly represented by the confluence of the Indian Ocean tsunami and the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe had a crucial influence on norm acceptance. This chapter turns the spotlight on another case of norm emergence, with a contrasting outcome, to probe whether the plausibility of the framework holds in a case of stalled norm change.

* * *

On Wednesday September 23, 2015, Ioane Teitiota was booked on a flight from New Zealand to his country of origin, the Pacific island nation of Kiribati (Dastgheib 2015). A five-year long asylum application process was at an end. The New Zealand Supreme Court had dismissed Teitiota’s application for leave to appeal and he was now about to be deported. Had he been granted refugee status in New Zealand, he would have been the world’s first legally recognized “climate refugee”. The applicant claimed that he was in need of protection “on the basis of changes to his environment in Kiribati caused by sea-level-rise associated with climate change” (Buchanan 2015:section II). The claim was rejected in all instances, using the argument that climate change is not among the reasons that grant protection under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. The High Court stated that it was not for it “to alter the scope of the Refugee Convention” (Buchanan 2015:section IIIB). Ioane Teitiota’s lawyer also had to admit that he had not been able to find “any New Zealand, Australian, Canadian, United Kingdom, United States, or European authority which had extended the protection of the Refugee Convention to a person adversely affected by climate change” (Buchanan 2015:section IV). Teitiota was not granted asylum on the basis of how the consequences of climate change affected his livelihood in his home country. While advanced data estimates show that an average of 26.4 million people have been displaced by disasters each year since 2008 (Yonetani, 2015), there is neither consensus among the international community nor a formal agreement on how to protect those who flee their home countries due to climate-related events.

The proposed norm under study here is one that suggests that there should be international protection – that is, some kind of right to asylum – for those
who are displaced as a consequence of environmental degradation (especially degradation related to climate change), which is expected to intensify in the future. The arguments underpinning this norm proposition often make the case that those fleeing persecution, war or violence have the right to apply for protection from a country other than their country of origin. The claim here is that environmental causes, such as sea-level rise, hurricanes, floods, drought and earthquakes, can also be a cause of cross-border displacement and it is argued that there is a gap in international commitments to protect this group. The norm proposition thus states that the international community should address this and ensure such rights to protection. As is shown below, the norm proposition underpinning protection for climate-induced migration has emerged and been advanced – to a degree – within the international system. Norm entrepreneurs were present and at moments when there seemed to be a general interest in the international community to address the issue. However, this norm has thus far failed to be widely accepted by the international community.

The exact scope and nature of the norm proposition is a contested topic. There is, for instance, no single, clear definition of what climate-induced migration is, and several different names, with different connotations, are used to describe the phenomenon. “Climate migration” (Flautre et al. 2013), “climate-induced migration” (Methmann and Oels 2015), “climate induced displacement” (Warner 2011), “climate refugees” (Biermann and Boas 2008), “environmentally induced migration” (Acketoft 2008) and “disaster displacement” (The Nansen Initiative 2015a) are just a few examples. In this thesis, the phrase “climate-induced migration”, has been chosen as this can be considered specific enough to be connected to the climate change debate but general enough to include different types of mobility, and best captures the issue as it has been discussed and handled empirically.

At large, the norm proposition to offer international protection to persons displaced by climate change and the environment grew out of a recognition that disasters and environmental degradation – many of these events expected to increase as a result of climate change – will destroy homes and living environments, making currently inhabited places uninhabitable. This could happen through sudden natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes or slow onset disasters such as drought or soil erosion. A famous example, illustrated by the example of Ioane Teitiota, is the small island developing states that are so low-lying that they will completely cease to exist as sea levels rise. Where can the citizens of these states go and what rights will they have to settle somewhere else?

One of the problems that this poses for the international community is the fact that there are no international standards to protect those who cross international borders due to environmental displacement. Environmental reasons, for instance, are not among the reasons for which one can be granted asylum under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention.
In 1985, Essam El-Hinnawi used the concept “environmental refugees” in a report for the United Nations Environment Programme. While environmental factors have impacted human mobility throughout history, this marked the introduction of the concept of climate-induced migration to international politics. The concept was reinforced a couple of years later in a paper from the World Watch Institute (Jacobson 1988), which argued that most states, as well as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), were ignoring the issue and did not view environmental causes as legitimate for granting refugee status. This was the start of the conceptualization of the issue and of gaps in international protection being brought to the attention of the international community. While this problem has been known to states, nongovernmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations and academia since at least the mid-1980s, and while the issue has been taken up in United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and UNHCR discussions, no solution has been found.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) picked up on the issue in the early 1990s and introduced it into the climate change policy sphere when it stated that “the gravest effects of climate change may be those on human migration” (IPCC 1992). Throughout the 1990s, the links between environmental degradation, climate change and human mobility were discussed, in international institutions and among academics. Graeme Hugo, later considered as a sort of founding father of studies on environment and migration, explored the environment-migration nexus and its policy implications in a classic piece in 1996 (Hugo 1996). Norman Myers, one of the most prominent “alarmists” in the climate migration field, published several pieces on environmental refugees in the 1990s and 2000s, predicting that up to 200 million people could be displaced by climate change by 2050 (Myers 1997, 2002; Myers and Kent 1995). An opposing, highly skeptical, stance was taken by Black (1998) in which he questioned the very notion of “climate refugees”. Myers and Black, and their works from that time, represent a fundamental divide on how the issue of climate-induced migration should be understood. This divide has persisted throughout the norm emergence process and is discussed in detail below.

Around 2007, the issue of climate-induced migration made its way beyond the circle of the most initiated and became known to a wider sphere. In fact, during this time, “climate refugees” became a buzz word and every actor with even the remotest interest in climate change, migration, security or humanitarian action seemed to make it a matter of their concern. The result was a great rush of reports and statements in this period. The normative gap in the international protection for this group and the propositions to fill the gap also

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38 The idea of “alarmists” and “skeptics” in the climate-induced migration debate comes from Gemenne (2009; 2011a).
became more outspoken during this period, not least from the academic community. This sudden boost, which certainly moved the issue of climate-induced migration, and the question of related protection, to the heart of the international political agenda, was a result of a connection between the climate change and security agendas – a topic of huge concern to the academic community at the time. In addition, advocates managed to frame climate-induced migration as “the human face of climate change” and thus attach moral and humanitarian connotations to the subject.

After this, the norm proposition of protection for climate-induced migration had found a venue of sorts within the UNFCCC negotiations and it was formally acknowledged in the 2010 Cancun Adaptation Framework (UNFCCC 2011). However, its introduction into a formal policy setting also forced the proposition to face the reality of sensitive political interests, especially regarding climate change, loss and damage, and migration. It became increasingly clear how difficult it would be to properly address the issue, and the desirability of action was thus thrown into question and became politically contentious. This polarization culminated at the UNHCR ExCom and ministerial meeting in 2011 when a majority of member states refused to take on further responsibilities for disaster displacement or to develop a framework to cover the protection gap (McAdam 2014). As a consequence, a large part of the discussions on this norm proposition had to be taken out of the UN for the time being and continued within the Nansen Initiative (described below).

A new opportunity for acceptance came with COP21 in Paris in the fall of 2015. After some controversies, human mobility in relation to climate change was finally mentioned in the outcome text of the conference – in a promise to create a “task force” to further investigate the issue (UNFCCC 2015b). While it was considered positive that human mobility was even mentioned in relation to the Paris Agreement, this did not in any way indicate an acceptance of new or enhanced protection standards or even a willingness to take concrete action on the norm proposition. So, at the conclusion of the crucial year of 2015 – the end of the time frame of this study - the norm proposition of enhanced protection for climate-induced migration had failed to be formalized and gain acceptance. The material, and in particular the interviews, expressed considerable doubt that there will be acceptance of new protection mechanisms in the foreseeable future.

This chapter disentangles the process of the emergence of this norm proposition by systematically assessing each factor in the framework in turn. The analysis reveals that the evolution of the proposition suffered from deficits in all the factors at different points in time but, most importantly, potential windows failed to lead to a productive outcome or did even take the shape of a “negative window”.

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6.1. Actors and agency in climate-induced migration

Analysis of this case begins by looking at one of the core factors explaining norm acceptance: the role of actors and agency. Specifically, as set out in the theoretical framework, norm entrepreneurs are both key initiators and drivers of the norm emergence process. The expectation is that the more engaged and coordinated norm entrepreneurs are, and the more access they have to policymakers, the greater significance they will have in shaping a process that leads to successful norm acceptance. This section investigates who the key actors in initiating, advocating and maintaining the norm proposition are. Furthermore, it assesses the credibility and level of coordination of these actors and their access to policymaking forums, and initiates a discussion on how agency interacts with other explanatory factors.

The material collected for this study shows that the issue of climate-induced migration, and the normative dynamics that underpin it, cannot be understood without examining two key players from these early days and forward – the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). The IOM picked up and began to highlight the issue in the early 1990s, partly fueled by its operational work in the field where it had seen the effects of natural disasters on displacement in practice (Ionesco and Traore Chazalnoël, 2015; Interview 1.10.). Early on, in 1992, the IOM was one of the organizers, together with the Refugee Policy Group and the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs, of one of the first large conferences on the topic. The IOM has been, and still see themselves as, a key player in introducing and driving this topic in the international policy arena (Ionesco and Traore Chazalnoël 2015), as illustrated by a number of notable events and publications. For instance, the IOM organized an expert workshop in Bangkok in 2007 and a research workshop in Munich in 2008 together with United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS). The latter was the birthplace of the “Climate Change, Environment and Migration Alliance”, an informal partnership consisting of IOM and several UN institutions and research centers. In 2009, the IOM published a 400-page report called Migration, the Environment and Climate Change: Assessing the Evidence, which thoroughly discussed the issue from a wide array of angles and was one of the first comprehensive publications on the subject. Its chapter, “The role of legal and normative frameworks for the protection of environmentally displaced people”, concluded not only that there were protection gaps for cross-border migration of this kind, but also that measures should be taken to address these (IOM 2009b), thereby further adding to the normative claims for protection. The work and engagement of the IOM is also demonstrated by the fact that until 2013, the IOM had funded or implemented over 700 projects and activities in some way related to climate-induced migration (IOM 2009a; Ionesco and Traore Chazalnoël 2015).
Another key player has been the UNHCR. While their mandate is specifically related to refugees under the 1951 Convention, they have taken a keen interest in the issue of protection for climate-induced migration. Among the reasons for this are their central role in migration and refugee sphere and their opportunities to promote the issue in the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC), which coordinates humanitarian assistance, as well as the strong engagement of Antonio Guterres, who was the High Commissioner for Refugees in 2005–2015. The UNHCR’s early interest in the issue was evidenced by their endorsement of a number of reports and research papers on the topic in the first decade of the century (for example Castles 2002; Piguet 2008), after which they gradually started to commission their own studies and make official statements.

In 2008, UNHCR increased its entrepreneurship activities in this field, and started to actively push the importance of addressing climate-induced migration in international policy forums. The interview material suggests that this was initiated due to growing concern among member states about future influxes of climate “refugees” being on the horizon (Interview 1.7). In 2008 (with an update in 2009), Antonio Guterres wrote a policy paper on behalf of UNHCR, *Climate Change, Natural Disasters and Human Displacement*. This was the first official policy paper on the topic by the organization and it clearly sought to conceptualize and gain traction for the issue. The paper clearly stated that people displaced by the consequences of climate change could certainly fall within the mandate of UNHCR and – crucially – that advocating for addressing the protection needs of those persons to be addressed should be part of UNHCR’s coming work (Guterres 2009). Moreover, during a press conference in 2009, Guterres warned that climate change could become the biggest driver of displacement in the future, and that there “might be a need for a new legal instrument” (Fleming 2009). Guterres has also said that: “The tragedy is that this population which is obliged to move doesn’t have a legal framework for protection like refugees… There is a void in terms of their protection” (quoted in The Nansen Initiative, 2015b:15). The gap in protection – and the recognition that some kind of enhanced framework would be needed – was also acknowledged within the UN General Assembly in a report for the Secretary-General on the security implications of climate change. It states that “a new and climate-focused legal framework would be necessary to protect persons displaced by climate change” (United Nations General Assembly, 2009:§59).

The IOM and UNHCR have thus been constantly present during developments on climate-induced migration, and at times highly influential in advocating and increasing traction for the issue, not least in comparison with other actors. However, while the proposition’s endorsement by these central organizations provided it with some legitimacy, it should be noted that these are

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39 Antonio Guterres was appointed the Secretary-General of the United Nations in 2017.
large organizations with broad mandates regarding migration and refugee issues. Research on and interactions with officials involved in the issue have made it clear that the units working on climate-induced migration within the IOM and the UNHCR were very small, consisting of only a handful of people. That said, these officials have been highly active in building closely-integrated networks, providing links to the academic community and maintaining some degree of visibility for the norm proposition.

An example of coordination and unity among norm entrepreneurs is the creation of an advisory group to the UNFCCC on climate change and human mobility. The Advisory Group consists of the UNHCR, the IOM, the UNU-EHS, the UNDP, the NRC/IDMC, Refugees International, the Center for International Relations Studies de Sciences Po (Sciences Po-CERI) and the Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED) (Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility 2015). The group came about through a call to generate more knowledge on climate change and human mobility, established in §14f of Cancun Decision 1/CP.16. The Advisory Group demonstrated entrepreneurship and engagement on the issue, not least by its efforts to provide the COPs after COP 16 in Cancun with analysis, insights and recommendations (Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility, 2015; Interview 1.7.; 1.11.) with the aim and in the hope of pushing the issue and its normative underpinning on to the broader climate change agenda.

In 2007-2009, which was a time of growing recognition of the implications of climate change on human migration, and an appreciation of the gaps in international protection, new actors joined the network of entrepreneurs. One of the more influential examples was the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). Their reports *Future floods of refugees* (Kolmannskog 2008) and *Climate change – people displaced* (Kolmannskog 2009) are introductory pieces written to make the issue accessible to the wider public and became well-cited texts on the subject. These reports are normatively charged, seeking to produce agreement on the importance of tackling the question. For instance, the latter report clearly formulates a norm proposition in that: “There is a need to identify and fill operational and legal gaps in protection” (Kolmannskog 2009:36).

The number of academics with an interest in the question of how to address climate-induced migration also grew during this period. One of the most specific and outspoken calls for the protection of climate-induced migrants written by scholars was an article published in *Environment*, titled “Protecting Climate Refugees: The Case for a Global Protocol” (Biermann & Boas 2008). The authors advocated the need for a specific protocol on the international

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40 This was the composition of the group at COP 21 in Paris. The group members have remained largely the same but the documents show that they previously included the International Labor Organization (ILO) but not the RAED (Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility 2014, 2015).
protection of climate refugees. This argument was followed up by the authors in another article in 2010, “Preparing for a Warmer World. Towards a Global Governance System to Protect Climate Refugees” (Biermann and Boas 2010). Indeed, the works of Biermann and Boas were of great importance to the subsequent understanding of how the issue could be handled. Another academic proposal came from Docherty and Giannini (2009), who proposed a new convention for “climate change refugees” – as this group were not included in the existing Refugee Convention.

In fact, the way in which several academics engaged to encourage this norm proposition in an almost activist way was remarkable. Several of the researchers who influenced this field greatly have already been mentioned. A few more political scientists and law scholars gained prominence during this phase, and their works have been an influential part of the policy literature in this field, not least as a result of their close collaboration with the IOM and UNHCR. A central figure is Francois Gemenne, a French political scientist who has published extensively on this issue and has interacted with the core policy group around climate-induced migration (as described below). One of his articles, “Why the Numbers Don’t Add Up: A review of estimates and predictions of people displaced by environmental changes”, scrutinizes the different estimates and calculations of climate-induced migration and convincingly shows why Myers’ numbers (discussed above) were gravely exaggerated and not a reasonable basis for future policy options (Gemenne 2011b).

Another central figure is Koko Warner, a researcher within the UNU-EHS, who has been at the forefront of empirical research on climate and migration, and who has been part of many of the reports and policy briefs commissioned by, for example, UNHCR. She was also part of the drafting process of the Cancun framework (McAdam, 2014) and the Paris Agreement (Randall 2015). The Australian lawyer Jane McAdam has written a number of books and articles specifically on the subject of climate migration and international law, and she is also an advisor to UNHCR on the legal aspects of climate-related displacement. While certainly recognizing normative gaps in legal frameworks regarding cross-border displacement, she has stressed the need for calm and contemplation when making calls for protection treaties. McAdam argues that more empirical knowledge is needed before moving towards an international agreement or treaty on protection standards for this group. She warns against going too far too soon as this would risk missing the actual and acute needs of the people concerned. Instead, McAdam suggests that the international community should aim for a more fragmented tool to address the problem, one with different and more specific solutions to the more specific situations and migration flows within the climate migration spectrum (McAdam 2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2014).

Given the organizational affiliation of the main entrepreneurs, getting access to the international policy arena was rather straightforward. UNHCR is a
main actor within the policy sphere and the IOM is an intergovernmental organization representing states, not an NGO. The academics in the network are often called on by international and national officials to write reports (see for example Castles, 2002 and Piguet, 2008 for UNHCR), and their research is often cited by stakeholders in their public pronouncements. There are also many other close links and collaborations. Koko Warner, for example, works at the United Nations University; Francois Gemenne joined the IOM as a partner in the Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Evidence for Policy (MECLEP) project and Jane McAdam functions as an advisor to UNHCR.

Taken together, the above analysis shows that the different kinds of existing entrepreneurs invoked in this subject make up an unusually prominent group with well-developed access to policymakers – and important quality in an entrepreneur trying to move a norm from proposition to widespread acceptance. However, the material also suggests that entrepreneurs had several different roles in this process, and that entrepreneurship is sometimes strained by the difficulties in balancing the different roles and relationships. One of the interviewees with no direct policymaking role, stated that this is a special field because policy and research are so interconnected, and that while is important to cooperate with policymakers, “we should be careful so that we are not to steered by them”. There is a tendency, it was argued, for research on these issues to be motivated by policy gaps rather than knowledge gaps (Interview 1.12).

That said, in the interviews conducted for this study, the interviewees were asked to reflect on norm entrepreneurs and key individuals who had helped put this issue on the international agenda. One key entrepreneur not yet mentioned stands out – Walter Kälin. Kälin, an international human rights lawyer, was the Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons in 2004–2010, and then served in the secretariat of the Nansen Initiative. In these positions, Kälin undertook a great deal of advocacy for the rights of climate-induced migrants. His strong engagement with these issues, in combination with his key positions within the international policy sphere, made his voice highly influential. In a speech on the Climate Change-Migration Nexus in 2008, Kälin distinguished between five different scenarios in which different types of natural disaster can trigger displacement and migration. He argued that while existing human rights norms should offer sufficient protection in some of these scenarios, “there is a need to clarify or even develop the normative framework applicable to other situations”. He then highlighted one such a situation by saying that

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41 At the UN Summit on Refugees and Migrants in September 2016, the IOM also joined the United Nations as a related organization, calling itself the “UN migration agency”. While this was the result of a long and close relationship, this was not the case in 2015, when this study ends.

42 A platform for discussions and experience exchange around disaster displacement.
“People displaced across international borders fall into a normative gap” (Kälin 2008).

In his role as Representative of the UNSG on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, Kälin was one of the lobbyists trying to raise the interest of states in the issue before COP 15 in Copenhagen in 2009, an effort which was relatively successful – even though the paragraph mentioning human mobility was not formally accepted until COP 16 in Cancun. Then, in 2011, partly as a consequence of the deep resistance shown to stronger international norms to protect climate-induced migrants at the UNHCR ExCom and ministerial meeting that year, the states of Norway and Switzerland decided that the issue was best removed from the UN platform and that a bottom-up consensus was required instead. This was the beginning of the Nansen Initiative, an organization concerned with cross-border disaster displacement, and Walter Kälin was asked to head its secretariat from the start. Under Kälin, the Nansen Initiative became a leading entrepreneur in terms of anchoring the issue on the international agenda and raising awareness of the link between displacement and disasters. It was never the intention, however, to create new legal obligations to fill the normative gap (Interview 1.11; 1.15).43

Throughout the evolution of the protection of climate-induced migrants as a normative goal, it is clear that a small group of recurring individuals were arranging or invited to speak at events such as seminars, round-tables and lectures, a pattern clearly identified in the interview material. This is a reflection of the fact that the norm proposition to protect climate-induced migrants was advocated by a small but tight group of norm entrepreneurs with a high level of coordination and contact between them. They were well respected by policymakers and had a high level of access to them. However, the material indicates that the norm entrepreneurs might have become too closely intertwined with policymakers and, for fear of losing credibility, they somewhat pushed back on the protection claims and lowered their expectations of what might be feasible to achieve in relation to formal policy – for instance in the UNFCCC context. Indeed, the entrepreneurs were less forceful in their objectives as the process evolved, in some ways adapting to what they perceived to be the “political reality”. Without strong advocacy specifically promoting protection, the norm proposition ran a high risk of losing momentum.

In chapter 3 and in the DRR case study (see chapter 5), we were reminded of a particular type of entrepreneurs known as “message entrepreneurs” (Fukuda-Parr and Hulme 2011). In the case of DRR and climate-induced migration alike, largely the same actors (or even individuals) functioned as norm entrepreneurs (that is, calling attention to the new norm, promoting it and making efforts to persuade stakeholders) and message entrepreneurs (that is,

43 More on the subject of human mobility in an UNFCCC context, and the UNHCR ExCom and ministerial meeting in 2011 as well as the Nansen Initiative can be found under the factor of venue.
working to create consensus in order to achieve political progress, rather than protecting the content of the norm). While entrepreneurs in the DRR field seem to have been able to balance these entrepreneurships in a way that protected the key values of the new norm while still fostering political unity, the norm entrepreneurship on climate-induced migration did not succeed in this regard. Their efforts to advance a new protection norm for climate-induced migrants seem to have been constrained by their institutional and bureaucratic roles which thus compromised many of the initial values and objectives of the norm, such as the assurance of new asylum rights, once the norm entered the policymaking arena. In addition, the case material shows that while the group of entrepreneurs was coordinated and engaged, it was not clear who would take the lead. One interviewee said that this was “because there are different institutions with different mandates. //…// It is kind of like a tragedy of the commons or a chicken and egg: no one is really sure who should take the lead” (Interview 1.9).

Moreover, even though these individuals fulfill the criteria for norm entrepreneurs, according to this framework, they do not necessarily see themselves as “real” advocates at all times. A representative of one of the involved organizations involved explained how they were not advocates because they are not representing a NGO – they were “not Greenpeace”; they were experts and provided technical support to states. On the other hand, the same person argued that they were advocating for the issue’s inclusion in the UNFCCC process and that they were advising the states to look at the issue from certain angles (Interview 1.7), which must be considered an entrepreneur-like action. This raises two issues. First, it suggests that officials in international organizations might not see themselves as entrepreneurs or advocates because they have a different idea of what an advocacy actor is. (These are traditionally expected to be interest groups and NGOs). Second, it shows how civil servants of this kind might not always feel they have the mandate to be outspoken proponents of a specific normative proposition, especially when functioning in their bureaucratic capacities. This sows confusion since the material suggests that these actors still function in different roles (as experts, advocates, mediators, and so on), which in practice can be compared to the contrast between a norm entrepreneur and a message entrepreneur (discussed above).

That said, the analysis on the remaining components of the framework shows that the norm entrepreneurs have had facilitating as well as impedimentary effects on the content and clarity of the norm and its framing. They have also taken far-reaching initiatives to encourage the inclusion of the proposition in a suitable and supportive venue, for instance in the UNFCCC negotiations, and to create a specialized venue in the shape of the Nansen Initiative. We will also discuss the role of agency during periods of potential change and whether the actors alone can be blamed for the failure to produce successful outcomes in terms of norm acceptance – or if they were hindered by other, mainly structural, factors.
The agency of norm entrepreneurs has been assessed as the first factor of the framework, partly as they are expected to have a core function in formulating the norm and shaping its content. The chapter now moves on to examine the content and clarity of the norm.

6.2. The norm itself: content and clarity

This section investigates the nature of the norm itself. It explores whether the proposition to enhance international protection to climate-induced migrants is conceived as complex or straightforward; and whether there is unity in definitions and a collective understanding of cause and effects. The theoretical assumption is that a complex norm with poor clarity and wide scope will face significantly prolonged, or even fatally undermined, norm acceptance process.

At its essence, this norm proposition is about ensuring international protection for displacement caused by climate change. The early mention of “environmental refugees” in a 1985 UNDP report (El-Hinnawi 1985) and the “scare tactics” by “alarmist” scholars such as Norman Myers in the 1990s (Myers 1997) initially brought the issue to the table. However, after that period and throughout the further conceptualization of this issue, it was increasingly recognized that while most climate-induced migration is expected to take place within countries, some people will also cross international borders (see for example Yonetani, 2015; Ionesco, Mokhnacheva and Gemenne, 2017) – and those persons would not currently enjoy protection under international law. Environmental reasons are for example not among the prerequisites covered in the 1951 UN Refugee Convention for defining a refugee. Nor are they in regional frameworks such as the EU Qualification Directive. It should be noted, however, that some kinds of migration resulting from disasters or environmental degradation could be covered by existing frameworks such as the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (Koser 2011) or broader international human rights law (McAdam 2012a). A small number of states such as Sweden,44 Finland and the USA are able to grant some kind of protection in the case of environmental catastrophes and disasters. Nonetheless, a significant legal and normative gap remains. Indeed, an increasing amount of actors, both non-governmental actors and international political institutions, have identified this fact and argued that action is necessary to build a common perspective and agree on enhanced protection mechanisms (Biermann and Boas 2010; Guterres 2009; IOM 2009b; Kolmannskog 2009; WBGU 2007). In normative wording, that climate-induced migrants should enjoy international protection.

44 In 2016, Sweden adopted new, albeit temporary, asylum legislation in which the paragraph on environmental catastrophes is not included.
During repeated attempts to understand or make sense of the phenomenon, it became clear that the norm proposition underpinning the discussion was characterized by a lack of clarity and focus. For instance, what exactly is a climate-induced migrant? How can climate-induced migration be distinguished from other types of migration? How could such a protection instrument be designed? What are the implications of such protection for other policy areas? Clearly, the issue itself is infused with conceptual, definitional and causal uncertainties (see for example Castles 2010; Kälin 2010 and Piguet, Pécoud, and de Guchteneire 2011). The answers to these questions proved immensely complex and, as they were further investigated, new empirical complexities and various inconsistencies in the normative claims appeared which further confused the general understanding of what was at stake. For instance, some empirical research argued that many types of climate-induced migration were inextricably intertwined with economic migration (and thus difficult to separate on the basis of a possible protection claim) or that the majority of these migration flows would occur in the future – and thus were not a pressing problem (see for example The Government Office for Science 2011). Such arguments and new empirical findings sowed doubt regarding the “oughtness” of a protection norm on climate-induced migration.

Analysis reveals that the core of the definitional debate revolved (and continues to revolve) around environmental factors as a cause of migration and around the types of mobility that this might cause. In the early phase of the debate, in the 1990s and early 2000s, the term “climate refugees” was commonly used to describe this group of migrants. One of the first outspoken normative claims for protection was made in 2003 in a report by the New Economics Foundation, in which both “environmental refugees” and “climate refugees” was used (Conisbee and Simms 2003). “Climate refugees” was also, for example, the wording of choice in the key texts by the academics Biermann & Boas on protection for this group (Biermann and Boas 2008, 2010). The same wording was even used as late as in the position paper by the Greens/EFA group of the European Parliament in 2013 (Flautre et al. 2013) and in an edited volume from 2018, Climate Refugees – Beyond the Legal Impasse (Behrman and Kent 2018). The expression gained much popularity as it has dramatic connotations and seems to provide an instant understanding of what is at stake. However, in strict legal terms, only those who fall within the scope of the 1951 Refugee Convention can be considered refugees. This is the reason why this usage of the concept attracted so much criticism and is rarely used in the debate today, replaced by denominations such as “climate-induced migration”, “environmental migration”, “disaster displacement”, and so on. In addition, the choice of wording regarding “climate” or “environment” is also contested. It could be argued that “the climate” or “climate change” in itself cannot be a reason for moving or fleeing. It is rather disasters or environmental degradation – perhaps as a consequence of climate change – that is the cause.
The case material here strongly suggests that the difficulties in clarifying the norm proposition obstructed discussions on possible solutions. Complexities around the issue and the surrounding debate took many forms. One is the complex causal relationship between environmental change and migration (Acketoft 2008; EACH-FOR 2009; European Commission 2013; The Government Office for Science 2011) but also the complexity of how migration decisions are made (Acketoft 2008; EACH-FOR 2009). In addition, the terminology concerning the issue is described as highly complex (see for example European Commission, 2013), as are the multiplicity of what are perceived as solutions (see for example The Government Office for Science, 2011). It is said that solutions should acknowledge this diversity and complexity, such as the type of event (drought, sea-level rise, storms, floods, and so on), the cause-effect link between migration and climate change, the precise effects on different types of movement (short-term/long-term, internal/regional/international) as well as the continuum of voluntary versus forced migration (see for example The Government Office for Science 2011). For policy stakeholders, this caused even more uncertainty and confusion regarding how the protection gap could or should be addressed (see for example McAdam 2012a; European Commission 2013). Several aspects of the norm proposition remain unclear and divisive.

William Lacy Swing, Director General of the IOM, illustrated these complexities in the following words in a speech in 2008:

Drawing the line between voluntary and forced environmentally-induced migration is therefore quite a complicated business. Rarely can a single factor, be it social, economic, environmental or otherwise, be pinpointed as “the” trigger for migration. With the exception of natural disasters that provoke flight in the moment of occurrence, the distinction between forced and voluntary migration is blurred. It is usually an accumulation of factors that “pushes people over the edge”, so to speak. Through a progressive worsening of conditions, a “tipping point” may be reached, when the decision to move is not yet totally “forced”, but it is certainly no longer completely voluntary either. When does the move of a subsistence farmer to the city because her yields have been declining year after year become “forced”? How dry does a village’s well need to get before the decision to migrate classifies as “forced”? And most importantly, how straightforward is it to trace these developments back to a purely environmental root cause?

(Swing 2008)

This quote also illustrates how key norm entrepreneurs (the IOM in this case) contributed to the questioning of the norm itself – even though the intent was to illuminate its complexities in order to gain a sound and accurate understanding of its difficulties. These difficult questions remind us that the discussion on climate-induced migration suffers from the absence of a coherent interna-
tional definition (EACH-FOR 2009; IOM 2009b). Indeed, different norm entrepreneur s have different perceptions of how to define the group at stake and which solutions are important.

An attempt to specify the scope and nature of the group of interest emerged from the IOM, which proposed the following “working definition”:

Environmental migrants are persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad.

(IOM, 2009b:19)

This IOM definition has been widely quoted by others (see for example European Commission, 2013; Kolmannskog, 2009) and is formulated in order to be as inclusive as possible. However, this also poses challenges in practical terms. Take the displacement-migration spectrum as an example. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) focuses on measuring forced displacement. In their view, displacement is by definition forced, while migration is voluntary. This perception differs from that of the IOM and others, which has a much wider understanding of the word “migration”. The IOM considers migration to be any kind of movement – either forced or voluntary (Interview 1.9.). Even though the previous discussion showed a close relationship between key norm entrepreneurs, a lack of clarity regarding definitions and appropriate measures raised concerns among policymakers and persons closely connected to the policy process as to whether entrepreneurs among themselves shared the same understanding of the meaning of the proposition discussed (Interview 1.8; 1.9).

In 2011, the British Government published what would become a highly influential report on the matter: the so-called Foresight Report (The Government Office for Science 2011). Frequently referenced by all involved actors, the Foresight Report was pivotal in the way that it convincingly argued how difficult it was to establish links between climate change and migration. The authors argued not only that the enormous estimates of future climate refugees were heavily exaggerated, but also that the effects of climate change on migration were utterly complex and the causalities between the two difficult, or even impossible, to disentangle. The report showed, for instance, that climate-induced migration is heavily intertwined with economic migration and corresponds largely to internal rural-urban movements. Furthermore, the report showed that examined migration flows sometimes occurred in unexpected directions. For instance, the report presented several examples of how people sometimes move into vulnerable or disaster-hit areas rather than out
from them. While the Foresight Report generated new knowledge on the subject, its results fueled further confusion regarding the complexities and uncertainties of the issue, thus undermining swift and strong norm emergence.

A paper by the European Commission offers a candid illustration of the point. It describes the complex links between migration and environmental factors, and notes the need for “comprehensive responses involving a broad range of issues and policies” which must be “tailored to local needs and conditions” (European Commission, 2013:15). The paper states that conceptual gaps regarding definitions, estimates, drivers and migration impacts have “hampered policy-making” (European Commission, 2013:12f). It also argues that the complexities of the issue provide a possible obstacle to future negotiations: “At any rate, the complexities of the topic and its comparative novelty as a subject of international policy dialogue between states means that the wider political consensus which would be necessary to establish international rules remains lacking, including at regional levels” (European Commission, 2013:20f).

The emergence of this norm proposition has been accompanied not only by political, but also by academic divides. This divergence began back in the 1990s with two publications, Myers & Kent (1995) and Black (1998), representing opposing viewpoints – the “alarmist” and the “skeptic” view respectively. The publications demonstrate profound disagreement between the authors on several key points, such as concepts, causalities and future prospects, as well as the fundamental disparity in their respective perceptions of the issue as such (see also Castles, 2002). This marked the start of large divides in the understanding of this topic that the material clearly shows have persisted throughout.

In general, the different approaches within this academic divide can be described as follows. One approach consists of those who are convinced that environmental factors, specifically the consequences climate change, will have a massive impact on human mobility. The other approach doubts these “horror scenarios” and stresses that the causality between climate change and migration is weak or at least does not always go in the directions expected. Francois Gemenne dedicated his doctoral thesis to this debate and called the two approaches “alarmists” (who originated from among natural scientists followed by NGOs and interest groups) and “skeptics” (who originated from social scientists and migration scholars) (Gemenne 2009). Another, similar, take is to divide the debate into “maximalists” and “minimalists”, where the maximalists would argue that there is a strong and direct link between environmental causes and migration while the minimalists emphasize the complexity and multicausality underpinning the environment-migration nexus (Suhrke 1994).

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45 For example, floods, hurricanes, drought or rising sea levels.
The alarmist/skeptic and maximalist/minimalist divides established in the first phase of norm evolution (roughly in the 1990s) were still present in 2015 when this study ends. Looking back on developments, Castles (2011) argues that there are as many as three substantial divides: the disciplinary divide (environmentalists vs. migration scholars), the methodological divide (deductive vs. inductive approaches) and the political divide (environmental refugees as a threat vs environmental refugees as a group in need of protection). The conclusion Castles reaches is that debate and policymaking on the issue of climate-induced migration is extremely politicized and polarized, and this has caused deadlock which hampers policy proceedings and is very difficult to escape from (an aspect that is elaborated on further under the factor of resistance).

Such a complex issue that spans several issue-areas also puts high demands on institutional capacities to coordinate across agencies, and the issue runs the risk of falling through the cracks in the system. As one official argued:

I think it is really an issue that is too broad for one agency. It is really important that IOM is involved, that other actors are involved, the UNDP, etc., because perhaps the UNHCR can tackle the protection angle. But what about migration as adaptation? It is not the UNHCR – it is the IOM. What about when you increase the resilience of people? You have all the development aspect on that, so it is the UNDP. /…/ …all bring a part of the solution.

(Interview 1.7)

In sum, the content of the norm proposition to protect climate-induced migrants is complex and multifaceted, and norm entrepreneurs have been struggling even among fellow advocates to agree on essential principles and objectives. This section has illustrated how the content of the norm is heavily shaped by and dependent on the actions of norm entrepreneurs. As argued in the theoretical framework chapter of this thesis, norm entrepreneurs identify, formulate (at least initially), defend, contest (against other stakeholders or opponents), clarify and define a norm proposition. However, this case shows that in their efforts to clarify the proposition and to do justice to its inherent complexity, key advocates have contributed to making the proposition even more fragmented, unclear and uncertain. The normal process of contestation – which usually characterizes the initial parts of a norm emergence – has in this case resulted in prolonged polarization about the fundamental desirability of the norm (which is discussed further in the section on resistance). Moreover, stakeholders have not been able to agree on the definition, scope or objectives of the norm proposition.

The emergence process of the norm proposition to protect climate-induced migrants thus demonstrates how it has been infused with a persistent lack of clarity and the lack of a unifying definition and understanding – even among norm entrepreneurs. This has made it more difficult to discuss solutions and
easier for skeptical policy makers to say that action must be postponed until there is more knowledge on the issue. The next section shifts the attention to the factor of framing, which is influenced by both norm entrepreneurs and norm characteristics, and helps to shape the success or failure of norm acceptance.

6.3. Framing

The issue of climate-induced migration is one that touches on many different policy sectors. Like disaster risk reduction, the other instance of norm emergence in this thesis, it has been discussed in relation to other phenomena; in this case, climate change, development, human rights, security and humanitarian aid, apart from the more specific connections to migration. This section analyzes the most important framings of climate-induced migration with a particular focus on the protection aspect: the connections to migration and refugees, to security and to vulnerability in the form of “the human face of climate change”. The section discusses how framing has changed over the years and how it has influenced developments. The theoretical framework suggests that the more contentious and sensitive the framing, the more difficult it will be to achieve norm acceptance.

6.3.1. The links to migration issues and refugees

The norm proposition to protect migrants crossing international borders as a result of climate-related events and consequences is about human mobility and asylum rights. Naturally, from the birth of the concept, climate-induced migration has been linked to other migration and refugee issues. Human mobility, whether voluntary or forced, is at the heart of this norm. However, the specific connections to the refugee regime have proved both helpful and obstructive to the norm. Early descriptions of this group as “environmental refugees” (El-Hinnawi 1985; Jacobson 1988; Myers 1997) strongly suggested that this group could be regarded as refugees in some sense, a connection further fueled by academic pieces promoting refugee-like protection for the group (see for example Biermann and Boas, 2008). Moreover, the take up under the UNHCR and IOM mandate – two of the largest international actors on migration and refugee issues in the world – also placed the norm proposition in the migration policy realm and it was often discussed in relation to existing migration regimes. As such, the migration and refugee framing is evident – and not surprising. However, it has been disputed whether this type of mobility should be discussed in relation to refugees and the Refugee Convention, and the migration framing has made the norm proposition highly politically sensitive and created much resistance. Therefore, a longer discussion on the
contentious connection to refugee issues is pursued under the section on resistance. The remainder of this section focuses on framings that are less instantly intuitive but which have been of great importance in the process – climate-induced migration as a security issue and climate-induced migration as "the human face of climate change".

6.3.2. Climate-induced migration as a security threat

Observations in this case indicate a major shift in political and public interest in the topic of the impact of climate change on migration around 2007–2008. The discussions in the first couple of decades after the normative gap had been identified primarily took place among a smaller group of organizations and academics, but in 2007 this substantially changed when climate-induced migration was fruitfully connected to climate change and security. This shift in framing can be traced to two seminal reports published in 2007, which for a short period put climate-induced migration at the forefront of the “climate security” debate. The wordings was dramatic and emotional. For instance, the report by Christian Aid, *Human Tide – the Real Migration Crisis*, started out by stating that:

As the effects of climate change join and exacerbate the conflicts, natural disasters and development projects that drive displacement, we fear that an emerging migration crisis will *spiral out of control*.

(Christian Aid 2007:1, emphasis added)

Furthermore, Christian Aid estimated that 1 billion people would be displaced from their homes by the year 2050.46

The second report, published by the German Security Council on Global Change (WBGU), was entitled *Climate Change as a Security Risk*. The possible triggering and intensification effects that climate change could have on migration if not mitigated were listed as one of the *key threats* to international stability and security. Moreover, the report clearly stated that environmental migrants are not provided for in international law, and explicitly recommended that:

…rather than adopting an additional protocol to the existing United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, vigorous efforts be made at this stage to establish a cross-sectoral multilateral Convention aiming at the issue of environmental migrants.

(WBGU 2007:11)

46 It is noteworthy that the same Myers as mentioned above was one of the authors of the climate change chapter of the report.
It must be remembered that climate security was an immensely hot topic at the time, and that it was around 2007–2008 that climate security began to gain serious ground within the UN system (Mobjörk et al. 2016). In 2007, the United Nations Security Council held a debate, the first of its kind, on the impacts of climate change on peace and security. During this debate, the British Foreign Secretary, and chair of the debate, Margaret Beckett, warned that climate change could result in migration on an unprecedented scale (UN Security Council 2007). In addition, other UN agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), showed a substantial increase in their focus on climate change and security at this time, alongside other, closely linked, institutions such as the World Bank (Mobjörk et al. 2016). In addition, the IPCC launched its fourth assessment report in 2007, which, among other things, listed possible impacts of climate change. Of the six phenomena listed, population migration was highlighted as a possible consequence of three (IPCC 2007). All these connected issues on climate-induced migration strongly to the climate security debate. The very large future climate-induced migration flows were almost perceived as a threat to national security and this was set forth as one of the main reasons to address them.

Further framing of migration as a potentially severe and dramatic climate-related issue can be found in the “Stern Review”, an extensive and ground-breaking report to the British Government on the economic consequences of climate change. In the report, Nicholas Stern concluded that people might become permanently displaced “due to rising sea levels, more frequent floods, and more intense droughts” (Stern 2007:91). Stern specifically highlights the estimates of Norman Myers of 150–200 million displaced persons by the middle of the century (Stern 2007:91f), feeding the “alarmist” notion of the phenomenon and thus further consolidating the story of massive waves of climate refugees into the western world.

These reports, together with the emerging discussions within the policy sphere, spurred a new phase in norm development that underlined climate-induced migration as a pressing security issue for the international community to address. Climate-induced migration made its way into the international policy arena and became a much discussed topic in various international forums.

6.3.3. The human face of climate change

Aside from these strong but somewhat sensitive framings, norm entrepreneurs also made efforts to keep the focus on the human destinies at stake, attempting

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47 The phenomena where population migration or movement was regarded as a major projected impact were: “Area affected by drought increases”; “Intense tropical cyclone activity increases”; and “Increased incidence of extreme high sea level (excludes tsunamis)” (IPCC 2007:13)
to frame climate-induced migration as “the human face of climate change”. This illustrates a more specific framing to the more general connections to climate change and environmental issues. Koko Warner used this expression when describing the goals of the humanitarian community on climate change and displacement in the UNFCCC negotiations around 2008–2009. For instance, she wrote that the humanitarian community mobilized to “ensure that the human face of climate change would be duly represented” (Warner, 2011:5). François Gemenne argues that the idea of climate migrants as the human face of climate change was very influential in putting the issue on the political agenda. He writes that “Environmental migration has been constructed as a catastrophic human impact of climate change” (Gemenne 2011a:253f). However, Gemenne’s key point is that the idea of climate-induced migrants as the human face of climate change is a discursive construction that does more harm than good in the long run, and that the deterministic view of environmental migration as a special and specific type of migration overshadows many aspects of this complex phenomenon. Gemenne thus argues that the “human face” framing would not be helpful in successfully addressing environmental migration in an adequate way. He concludes: “portraying ‘climate refugees’ as the human face of climate change is helpful in many ways, but certainly not to accurately describe the realities of migration associated with environmental changes” (Gemenne 2011a:253).

Moral and humanitarian framing was also carried out using pictures representing climate-induced migrants, which often showed people in dire straits. People carrying their belongings on their backs or their heads, wading through deep water or crossing dry and barren landscapes were common (see for example the front pages of key publications shaping the debate such as Kolmannskog 2009; McAdam 2012b or UNHCR 2015). In addition, the vulnerability of the affected persons and societies was emphasized in discussions on why climate-induced migration required action by the international community (See for example Kolmannskog 2008; Swing 2008; United Nations General Assembly 2009).

A humanitarian and moral framing is also revealed in the titles chosen by the entrepreneurs for their key reports. The titles often indicate and attempt to give the issue a human face and link it to notions of harmed individuals. For instance, a 2007 Christian Aid report Human tide – the real migration crisis has a front page featuring two destitute children in a poverty-stricken setting (Christian Aid 2007). In a similar vein, the displacement of persons is connected to climate change in the title of a NRC report from 2009: Climate changed: people displaced, which is illustrated with a group of people carrying their belongings while wading through deep water (Kolmannskog 2009).

Climate-induced migrants as the human face of climate change can be understood as a narrative that represents a broader discussion where vulnerability is used as a justification for promoting the norm proposition. The material shows that this norm proposition is often justified by highlighting the fact that
it is the most vulnerable individuals and countries that will be affected most by climate change, and that it is these people who are most likely to be forcibly displaced. The word “vulnerability” is mentioned in material by almost all the studied actors, which can be illustrated by a few examples. First, one of the key conferences on this issue, organized by the UN University in Bonn in 2008, was entitled “Environment, Forced Migration and Social Vulnerability”. William Lacy Swing, the director of the IOM stated in the keynote speech:48

…developing countries suffer up to 98% of the casualties in natural disasters. In developing countries 1 in 19 persons are affected by climate shocks, compared with 1 in 1,500 in OECD countries. In turn, poorer and more marginalised communities, even within richer societies, tend to bear the brunt of environmental events and processes. One needs to look no further than to the patterns of distress, divided along ethnic and socio-economic lines, in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina to illustrate this point.

(Swing, 2008:4)

In the same vein, in one of the early reports highlighting this problematique, the Norwegian Refugee Council emphasized the responsibilities of the rich world to assist those vulnerable groups worst affected by climate change, and concluded with the hope that “climate change will foster a new and stronger sense of solidarity” (Kolmannskog 2008).

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The framing efforts above show how connections were attempted with other well-established norms and emotional claims made to gain traction and push progress on this issue. Evident ties to climate change, migration and refugees were the overarching frames accompanying the norm emergence process. However, security-related issues and a focus on vulnerability have been emphasized here as they are especially important for understanding the boost in interest in the issue within the UN system around 2007–2008. Moreover, these are the framings that were especially interesting for the specific aspect of international protection for climate-induced migrants.

However, other kinds of framing also influenced the understanding of climate-induced migration, but are not as closely connected to the specific aspect of protection. For instance, what might be called the “development framing” linked the issue to problems of development. The notion put forward here concerns the reductions in livelihood and breadwinning opportunities caused by environmental changes, which triggers migration (Interview 1.1; Swing 2008; The Government Office for Science 2011). Another framing, which has been

48 The speech was delivered by Philippe Boncour, Head of International Dialogue on Migration, IOM.
particularly interesting in UNFCCC terms, is that of “adaptation” and viewing migration as a plausible option in that populations have to adapt to climate change (IOM 2009b; The Government Office for Science 2011). Thinking of climate-induced migration in these terms is somewhat less sensitive and dramatic, but also somewhat decreases the sense of urgency in handling it politically and to shifts the focus away from issues of protection.

One reason for the variety of framings of this issue is the multifaceted and imprecise content of this norm proposition (discussed in the previous section). Various framings have attempted to capture the norm’s complexity and open many doors for action and to different venues, but they leave little room for apportioning direct responsibility (as further discussed in the next section). Here we can see the conceptual links between how agency is related to framing through activities such as linking (Rost Rublee 2009) and strategic framing (Rhinard 2010), as discussed in the theory chapter. The analysis reveals that vulnerability framing was been an active measure by entrepreneurs in order to evoke sympathy for the new normative claims. Security, on the other hand, seems to be a “reversed strategic framing”, seen from the viewpoint of this norm proposition. This means that climate-induced migration has been used by climate security proponents and climate change advocates in general in order to increase attention on the consequences of climate change at large. Nonetheless, we can pinpoint that security connections were critical in placing climate-induced migration on the UN agenda, as discussed above.

In sum, this section has discussed how the norm proposition under scrutiny here has been particularly linked to migration and refugee issues, to climate change, to vulnerability, and to security. The link to migration issues, and especially to refugee law, has proved highly sensitive and contentious, an aspect which will be further elaborated on in the section on resistance. The connections to climate change can be divided into different types of linkages. First, the connection to climate security, which proved vital to gaining traction and attention for the issue around 2007–2009. Second, the framing of climate-induced migrants as the human face of climate change has given some moral justification for promoting the issue. Yet another aspect, which has not been emphasized here but which will be further discussed under the factor of resistance, is the fact that the issue of human mobility in relation to climate change came to be negotiated under the Warsaw Mechanism for Loss and Damage. This categorization means that the norm proposition on protection was equated to issues of responsibility, insurance and reimbursement, aspects which are not easily negotiated in an international setting. As the framing of the norm proposition has important implications for determining possible institutional settings and venues for discussions and negotiation, the next section continues the discussion on several of the aspects raised here.
6.4. Venue

As discussed in the theoretical chapter of this study, one important factor shaping norm acceptance is “venue”, which refers to whether there is an institutional home for the norm proposition and whether there is a suitable platform for norm-related discussions and negotiations. The expectation is that a lack of venue – meaning that there is no dedicated venue within which to take up the norm proposition, or perhaps no clear venue with a formal mandate to do so – decreases the likelihood of norm acceptance.

The norm proposition studied here does not lack a home within the international policy system. As demonstrated in the discussion on norm entrepreneurs, the importance of protecting climate-induced migrants has advocates in UNHCR as well as the IOM. A central analytical question, however, is whether this institutional concern is enough, as concern for climate-induced migration constitutes only a small part of these very large organizations with broad mandates; and whether there is a proper venue – a setting within which negotiations can take place, agreements can be made and norms accepted. In the case of climate migration protection, those venues have been the UNHCR Executive Committee, the Nansen Initiative and – most prominently thus far – the UNFCCC negotiations. Each is examined in turn to assess the extent to which it has provided a suitable venue for hosting and promoting the norm on climate-induced migration.

The UNFCCC was adopted in 1992 and has since been a forum for UN member states to discuss and address the impacts of climate change. Stakeholders assemble every year at the Conference of the Parties (COP) and have followed up the 1992 Framework Convention with the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 and the Paris Agreement in 2015. The introduction of migration and displacement as a consequence of climate change into the UNFCCC discussions began in 2009 with the establishment of an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) task force on climate change. Later that year a sub-group specifically aimed at exploring climate change migration and displacement was also created. The purpose of the IASC task force was to provide input into the UNFCCC negotiations and to bridge the gap between the humanitarian community and the UNFCCC negotiators (McAdam 2014; Warner 2011).

At COP 14 in Poznan, an assembly text was compiled in which climate and migration were mentioned (UNFCCC 2009). At COP 15 in Copenhagen, migration was mentioned in draft texts but not included in the final text at the time (UNFCCC 2010; Warner 2011). All this laid the groundwork leading up to the mention of climate-induced migration at COP 16 in 2010 and in the resulting Cancun Adaptation Framework. The wording is weak and non-binding, however, inviting parties to:

50 The draft text was, however, later considered the outcome text of the negotiations.
Undertake measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation, where appropriate, at the national, regional and international levels.

(UNFCCC, 2011:§14f)

Koko Warner, Head of the Environmental Migration, Social Vulnerability and Adaptation Section at the UNU-EHS, scrutinizes this paragraph in detail in a UNHCR policy paper (Warner 2011). She argues that this wording signalled a comprehension of the complexity of the nature of climate-induced migration and the measures it would require at different levels. In addition, Warner describes this wording as the result of preparatory negotiations in Tianjin, China, where this soft wording was the only way to get such a sensitive issue into the final agreement – illustrating the careful balancing act that was required to make small steps forward in the UNFCCC venue. Warner writes:

Discussions between various Parties in Tianjin confirmed that the new wording suggested by the Chair was acceptable, and that the issue was important, but not controversial in terms of what was being asked: voluntary measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation. While the topic of migration and displacement itself has the potential to be divisive, the way that it had been couched and presented to UNFCCC delegates (voluntary, not embedded in normative language, not linked to contentious issues) prepared the grounds for its inclusion.

(Warner, 2011:12)

The Cancun Adaptation Framework can be considered a milestone in the norm emergence on climate-induced displacement. It was the first time that the issue made it all the way in to the final text. It was also a stepping stone from which the UNHCR ramped up its advocacy work on the topic and an important reference for the discussions at the upcoming Nansen Conference (CICERO et al. 2011; McAdam 2012a, 2014; UNFCCC 2011; Warner 2011).

These developments demonstrate, however, that as the question of climate-induced migration moved into more formal settings within the UNFCCC, the desirability of offering enhanced protection was increasingly being questioned. At the same time, research increasingly nuanced the picture of how climate and migration were intertwined. Even though knowledge of the issue increased, perceptions of its complexities also increased, which made it difficult for policymakers to grasp. The complexities surrounding the issue also made it difficult to formulate, or even to imagine, an adequate response.

By COP21 in Paris, the question of human mobility was being negotiated under the Warsaw Mechanism for Loss and Damage.\footnote{The Warsaw Mechanism for Loss and Damage was established at COP19 in 2013. It aims to "address loss and damage associated with impacts of climate change, including extreme events and slow onset events, in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse climate change impacts."} It was not evident that
that this was the most suitable section – and it was indeed sensitive – but at the time it seemed most feasible. However, advocates believed that discussing it under the section on adaptation might have been more effective (Interview 2.11). The Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility, with UNHCR, the IOM and the Nansen Initiative at the forefront, lobbied hard to get a formulation on human mobility into the Paris Agreement. While hopes were high, the group had what they called “realistic expectations” of what would be possible to attain (Interviews 1.8; 1.15). Eventually, stakeholders agreed on a formulation to create a task force “to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change” (UNFCCC 2015b). After a last-minute hiccup where the formulation suddenly disappeared from the draft, the paragraph reappeared in the final agreement with the help of a couple of strong actors. French negotiators, for instance, seem to have played a role as they strove to include as many issues as possible in the Paris Agreement in order to be able to claim a comprehensive success (Interviews 1.8; 1.11). While the creation of the task force in itself did not imply anything new in terms of protection for climate-induced migrants, there is a view that its establishment might be important to the possibility of a successful outcome on norm acceptance in the future (Interviews 1.10; 1.16).

Looking back, despite the “minor success” in Paris, it has been questioned whether the UNFCCC is indeed the right forum for these discussions. The UNFCCC has been regarded as having important convening power (Interview 1.16), but its long and crowded agenda and politicized context make it difficult for discussions on human mobility to be prioritized (Interview 1.11). Alex Randall, from the UK Climate Change and Migration Coalition, has pointed out that while the climate talks certainly have a role to play, it must not be the only venue in which to push policymaking on climate-induced migration. One reason for this is the particular scope of climate change, which would not include all kinds of environmental migration. Another reason is the lengthiness of the climate negotiations, which could delay finding protection solutions for climate displacement within a reasonable time horizon (Randall 2016). Jane McAdam (2011:6) has argued, referring to a speech by Dr. J. Barnett, that large negotiations like these tend to get “bogged down in linguistic detail” and delay substantial action. Another argument is that linking migration to climate change is problematic because it suggests notions of state responsibility, which could dampen political will rather than spur action.

Another venue within which some actors have attempted to pursue new protection norms is UNHCR and its Executive Committee (ExCom). Follow-

ing the wording in the Cancun Adaptation Framework in 2010 and the mandate of the IASC Task force on climate change, a closed expert meeting was held in Bellagio, Italy, in February 2011, organized by UNHCR and other stakeholders. The theme of the meeting was climate change and displacement, and the deliberations were based on a number of expert papers asked to evaluate the sufficiency of existing policy frameworks and to analyze the need for additional protection instruments. One of the main messages from the meeting was that there is a need for a global guiding framework or instrument regarding externally displaced persons that are not covered by the Refugee Convention (McAdam 2014; UNHCR 2011, 2015).

The expert meeting was followed by two more high-level meetings in the same year. UNHCR had a meeting for its ExCom in June 2011, followed by a ministerial meeting in December. These meetings marked an intensification of UNHCR’s work on protection for climate-induced migration but, as data gathered here reveals, still demonstrate only faint political interest from the states involved, mainly because states felt that the work of UNHCR was already overwhelmed by conventional refugees (Interview 1.7). At the ExCom, UNHCR put forward a proposal from IASC that it should take on the role of lead agency regarding protection on displacement from natural disasters – a proposal which was not met with any enthusiasm by states. The UNHCR ministerial meeting in December the same year was no greater success. In this meeting, UNHCR failed to gather the required support for the development of a normative framework that covered the gaps in protection not covered by the Refugee Convention. (McAdam 2014).

Also in 2011, the Norwegian Government, together with the Center for International Climate and Environmental Research and the NRC, sponsored the so-called Nansen Conference. This multilateral conference laid down a number of principles intended to guide responses to displacement in the context of climate change and other environmental hazards. One of the principles read:

A more coherent and consistent approach at the international level is needed to meet the protection needs of people displaced externally owing to sudden-onset disasters. States, working in conjunction with UNHCR and other relevant stakeholders, could develop a guiding framework or instrument in this regard. (CICERO et al. 2011:5, emphasis added)

The Nansen Conference was the starting point of the Nansen Initiative, initiated by the Norwegian and Swiss governments. The idea originated from a viewpoint that the states were not ready to discuss this issue in a serious way within the UN system – which had been demonstrated at the UNHCR ExCom and ministerial meetings. For instance, one interviewee explained how actors involved in the Nansen Conference had expected governments at the UNHCR Ministerial Conference at the end of the year to give UNHCR a “green light” to restart a serious discussion around this subject. However, since the outcome
of the ministerial meeting was quite the opposite to this expectation, Switzerland and Norway considered it necessary to take the climate migration and protection issue out of the UN – leading to the establishment of the Nansen Initiative (Interview 1.15).

The Nansen Initiative became a multilateral discursive platform aimed at exchanging best practices on addressing disaster displacement. The Nansen regional and global consultations were its main activities. A number of regional consultation processes culminated in a “global consultation” in October 2015. The global consultations were intended to compile and exchange ideas and best practices as well as to reach a consensus on definitions and concepts. The outcome of the consultation process was a so-called Protection Agenda.\(^{52}\) This suggests a number of measures to address disaster displacement. It is important to underline here that the agenda does not aim to expand the legal obligations of states under international refugee and human rights law on cross-border disaster-displaced persons and persons at risk of being displaced (The Nansen Initiative, 2015a:16). The Protection Agenda was endorsed by 109 governments (The Nansen Initiative 2015c:61), perhaps as a result of its informal and highly non-binding nature. The Nansen Initiative was a venue fully devoted to, and solely created for, discussions on protection after disaster displacement. It has its own secretariat and includes a large proportion of the world’s states as well as many organizations. Its voluntary nature has led to relatively fruitful discussions, resulting in a protection agenda, which has also helped to depoliticize the issue and move it closer to formal agendas like that of the UN (Interview 1.7; The Nansen Initiative 2015c).

Considering the analytical categories of framing and venue together, it is clear that framing has shaped take-up in specific venues. Climate-induced migration has been considered a climate change issue, on the one hand (and has thus been included in the UNFCCC COPs), and as a “refugee-like” issue, on the other, which has justified its take-up by UNHCR. However, the selection of these venues has followed somewhat different logics with different types of agency involvement. The adoption of the issue by UNHCR stemmed from concern about future refugee flows among the member states of the organization (Interview 1.7), and the individual engagement of Antonio Guterres. Regarding the UNFCCC, on the other hand, external norm entrepreneurs – Walter Kälin among them – secured the issue’s inclusion in an already wide and crowded climate negotiation agenda through systematic lobbying. A strong role for agency was also demonstrated by the fact that the search for venues resulted in the establishment of a new, narrower and more specialized venue – the Nansen Initiative – when the UNHCR failed to live up to expectations. The Nansen Initiative managed to carve out a smaller, more precise niche for the broader original norm proposition – specifically to exchange best practices

\(^{52}\) The Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change (The Nansen Initiative 2015a).
regarding disaster displacement. Indeed, the fragmented and complex content of the norm proposition – trying to include so many aspects and types of mobility – has obstructed the institutional placement of the norm proposition, since no venue has taken on full responsibility for addressing the norm.

In sum, analysis of the institutional homes and venues for negotiation that the norm proposition relates to shows how the proposition has been partly institutionalized and has been taken up in UN discussions. However, first, the UNFCCC showed only mild interest in human mobility, partly as a result of an already crowded climate change agenda and partly because of its sensitive and slightly awkward positioning under the section on loss and damage. Second, using the UNHCR ExCom and ministerial meetings has proved an unfeasible path. Third, the Nansen Initiative turned out to be a productive platform for discussion but has not sought to create new protection norms. Moving on to whether the norm proposition has been subject to resistance, previous findings on definitions, framing and venue come back into discussion.

6.5. Resistance

If we had, for example, a refugee convention covering climate change displaced persons, that would be like the top – because people would be covered. But it is not going this way because of political sensitivity.

(Interview 1.7, emphasis added)

Focusing in on the topic of resistance, this section considers aspects of conflict, resistance and political will – or their absence. The theoretical framework presumes that a high level of resistance has the potential to substantially prolong or even prevent norm acceptance. In this case, the material shows how the norm proposition has been subject to extensive resistance and a lack of political will, linked to the academic divide that stemmed from the early days of norm emergence but also the increasingly contentiousness of issues around migration.

Resistance can come in different forms and range from neglect to outspoken opposition (see chapter 3). Neglect can manifest itself through de-prioritization and agenda exclusion, while outspoken opponents can be either defenders of the status quo or “rival entrepreneurs” (Scott and Bloomfield 2017; Tallberg 2003).

The material in this case consistently gave the impression of a general lack of political will to fully address the issue of climate-induced migration. Several aspects that have contributed to this lack are mentioned. States are reluctant to move forward with formalizing norms on protection for fear of undermining the existing Refugee Convention and of the issue’s inherent complexities, and because of competing priorities on the political agenda. It was noted
that migration issues are generally highly politically sensitive (Interviews 1.3; 1.6), and that the protection of climate-induced migrants is not perceived as a pressing issue from states’ perspectives. They would rather focus on other things, such as addressing root causes (Interview 1.7). From a European point of view, the lack of political appetite arises partly from the fact that “bigger issues” have taken up space on the political agenda (such as the financial crisis in 2008) and partly from the rise of anti-immigration parties and increased xenophobia as well as an already large influx of migrants (Interviews 1.1; 1.6). These circumstances further restricted what little leeway there was previously were to enhance any kind of asylum rights.

The interviewees for this study were asked to identify any actor or state that was opposing or actively working against this issue. The answers to this were negative (for example Interviews 1.1; 1.4; 1.7 and 1.10). Resistance was said to be more subtle. The core of the dispute instead lies in the understanding of the issue and a distinction between what an appropriate and acceptable response should be, as well as using different ways to avoid making a decision.

The viewpoint that there is a lack of political will is supported by previous texts on the development, in which it is suggested that the absence of political will might be a result of the polarization of the issue (Castles, 2011), a lack of knowledge regarding the issue (Castles 2010) or of other competing priorities on the agenda (Kälin 2010), as well as a result of the sensitivity of migration issues generally (McAdam, 2014).

Apart from the definitional and conceptual discussions (discussed in the section on “the norm itself”), many of the disputes revolve around the fundamental desirability of a protection norm. For instance, one argument that has been posed against this proposition is that a new or enhanced protection instrument is unnecessary – or at least not the most feasible way to address climate-induced migration. The underlying argument is that there is no one solution to the protection problem as it cannot be considered to be just one problem (reflected in, for instance, IOM 2009b and UNHCR 2015, among many others. See also McAdam 2011). Another argument is that there are also other forms of migration, such as poverty migration, that are not covered in international law (McAdam, 2012:ch.1). There is already concern from the actors who want to preserve the existing Refugee Convention that the convention is under threat at the moment due to heavily decreased political will to protect the rights of asylum seekers. There is thus a fear that opening up the existing convention to other categories of displacement – or even discussing climate-induced migration in refugee-like terms – would risk undermining the Refugee Convention or lead to its collapse (Guterres, 2009; Interview 1.7). One of the interviewees expressed a feeling that UNHCR as an organization had tried to take a lead on this issue but had got its “knuckles rapped” by the majority of the member states as there was a view that UNHCR already had “enough on their plate” and that there was no need to expand its mandate (Interview
The reluctance to enhance protection norms to cover this group also reminds us of the resistance shown at the UNHCR ExCom and ministerial meeting, discussed under “venue” above.

While the norm proposition has been slightly more successful in UNFCCC negotiations, this setting has also shown signs of resistance. In later years, human mobility in the UNFCCC context has been handled under the section on loss and damage. This categorization comes with implications regarding issues of responsibility and compensation. If migration flows can be connected to climate change, then it could also be argued that the countries most responsible for climate change (i.e. the industrialized countries) are also responsible for the human displacement that follows. As might be expected, this logic fueled a general resistance from industrialized countries to accepting human mobility as a valid part of the climate negotiations. One interviewee described this reluctance:

The climate change negotiations have been very much affected by loss and damage, and compensation issues. And that is why you did have an immediate reaction from the countries of the North. We are not accepting that kind of responsibility, that we would have to take in people because we have caused global warming. So, it is very difficult – if that is the point of departure – to have any progress.

(Interview 1.15)

The material shows that it is not only political will that has declined. The main norm entrepreneurs also reduced their advocacy of the specific proposition, over time. While the norm entrepreneurs have organized and promoted numerous events, meetings and publications on this subject throughout the past decade (for examples and overviews of these activities, see IOM 2009a; UNHCR 2015), a close examination suggests that the specific call for international protection for climate-induced migrants seems to have diminished in strength of late. As a result of its complexity, discussion on addressing climate-induced migration has divided into several separate normative discussions, of which the proposition for protection is only one, and increasingly deprioritized on the entrepreneurs’ agendas. There is even some disagreement about the desirability of specific measures surrounding climate change-related migration. Some experts and advocates have shifted their thinking towards a more generic approach to migration, development and adaptation.

Norm entrepreneurs in this case had exceptional capacity, reputation and access to government representatives and other policy makers, which the theoretical framework suggests would lead to success. Nonetheless, in the discussions leading up to the Paris Agreement in 2015, which marked a defining moment for negotiations on the consequences of climate change, these central

53 For instance, regarding internal displacement, planned relocation, adaptation and mitigation.
entrepreneurs had toned down their promotion of enhanced protection for climate-induced migrants, which left the norm proposition in a limbo. It made its way onto the political agenda, but was then relegated to the periphery of the political discussions. The evidence suggests that the enthusiasm of these centrally placed entrepreneurs had been tempered by a decline in the political feasibility of enhanced protection mechanisms and, possibly to preserve their access and credibility vis-à-vis policymakers, they toned down their calls to fill the identified protection gap. (In colloquial terms, they “saw the writing on the wall” and stopped expending political capital.) In fact, newer dimensions of the issue had entered the agenda, such as resilience and migration as adaptation, and are seen as more relevant to solving the problem and more politically appealing in an era of crowded policy agendas (Mayer 2014; Methmann and Oels 2015).

Various forms of norm resistance exemplified in this case comply with a type of subtle resistance identified by Scott and Bloomfield (2017), in which actors might very well support a new norm in principle (i.e. no or very few actors have outspokenly argued that protection for climate-induced migration is wrong in itself) while their actions point in another direction. For instance, entrepreneurs might take actions that undermine the advance of the proposed norm, in this case by iteratively calling for more research in order to procrastinate active measures, or by putting the spotlights on other dimensions of the issue, such as migration as adaptation. Many of the norm’s opponents also demonstrate characteristics of what Scott and Bloomfield (2017) describe as the classic “antipreneur”, meaning defenders of the status quo and opponents of norm change. In this case, such actors defended the current protection frameworks and opposed ensuring protection for climate-induced migration for fear of undermining the existing Refugee Convention or of opening up existing protection policies to cover new types of migration (such as migration resulting from poverty, health, etc.)

This section has shown that the norm proposition to offer international protection to climate-induced migrants was met with a high degree of reluctance and resistance, and a lack of political will to promote the norm. The material suggests that this resistance came from a persistent lack of clarity and uncertainty regarding the content and implications of the norm, from sensitive framing (e.g. regarding migration and refugee politics and loss and damage from climate impacts) and from a fear of the implications of departing from the status quo. The next section shifts the spotlight on to the last and most novel factor of the analytical framework – the role of contingencies in shaping norm acceptance. The section draws together the insights discussed above, and examines the joint effects of these factors and how they coincide with the broader political and societal context; that is, the presence and influence of contingencies.
6.6. Accounting for contingencies

One of the aims of this thesis is to investigate the potential explanatory leverage of contingencies in cases of norm acceptance. If a norm proposition cannot be regarded as having been accepted, as is the case here, the analysis must examine whether the norm proposition failed to enjoy the boost in salience and attention provided by an event that might trigger a window of opportunity (i.e. the period of potential change). Another theoretical possibility is that a window of opportunity did indeed arise but was not sufficiently seized by entrepreneurs, or the window was opened at the “wrong time” in the evolution of a norm. As discussed in the theoretical chapter of this study, contingencies matter most when other important factors are sufficiently fulfilled. Yet another alternative is of course that other factors seem to play a much more decisive role in the outcome – in which case the proposed framework would appear less plausible.

More specifically, the importance of contingencies is understood through three consecutive steps. First, a contingent event intervenes in the norm emergence process by boosting the salience of a norm proposition. Second, this boost in salience is expected to trigger a period of heightened fluidity in actors’ influence and institutional arrangements – a period of increased susceptibility to change, here understood as a window of opportunity. Third, the window is more likely to lead to a leap forward in norm acceptance if it also aligns with other factors that influence norm success (the first five factors of the framework). For instance, if there is a certain level of maturity in the content and clarity of the norm, or that institutional structures to cater for the new norm (including available solutions) are available. The objective of this operationalization is to understand how and when contingencies affect the norm emergence process in a way that influences, or possibly even determines, its progress towards norm acceptance.

In this case, there were three crucial points in the development of this norm where a major leap in norm acceptance could have been expected. First, the period 2007–2008 represented a time when the issue received a sudden boost and for a short period was the “new and hot” topic in climate security. Second, a number of high-level events in 2011 within UNHCR provided fortuitous opportunities for producing new protection instruments for climate-induced migrants – and several stakeholders also expected it to do so. Third, the coinciding events of 2015, with the culmination of the UNFCCC negotiations and the Nansen consultations, together with a coordinated and strong group of advocates prepared to lobby for human mobility, led to high expectations for COP 21 in Paris. However, none of these crucial points led to a major leap in acceptance of the norm to protect climate-induced migrants. The remainder of this section discusses the role of contingencies at these crucial points – as well as how they and their outcomes can be understood in terms of windows of opportunity.
During the buzz word phase mentioned above, in 2007-2008, the salience of the norm proposition was substantially heightened and conditions were favourable in such a way that it opened a window of opportunity. The linkages made to security during this time made the norm proposition seem appropriate, legitimate and pressing. At the same time, policymakers as well as other types of advocates needed a policy problem that could boost the climate change–security agenda and give it a “human face”. As was shown in the discussion of connections to other norms, these specific connections were frequently used at this time. The notion of “climate refugees” was a convenient way to make strong emotional connections, and it was framed in such a way that the problem felt urgent. We can recall how a Christian Aid report from 2007 feared that the emerging climate migration crisis would “spiral out of control” (Christian Aid 2007) and how the British Foreign Secretary warned that climate change could result in migration on an unprecedented scale at a debate in the Security Council (UN Security Council 2007).

However, at that particular moment, no politically feasible solutions were available or being developed. In addition, a lack of coherent definitions, contestation concerning the issue, and the question of international protection in particular, made the already complex issue more fragmented. It has been recognized that a whole range of responses would probably be needed to handle all types of climate-induced migration. Nonetheless, the heightened salience, and the attentive work of entrepreneurs helped the norm proposition through the important step of being included in UNFCCC negotiations and especially of being mentioned in the Cancun Adaptation Framework in 2010.

Another opportunity to move the proposition towards establishment and acceptance arose in 2011. As mentioned above, human mobility had finally made its way into an outcome document of the UNFCCC negotiations in Cancun. Promoters saw this breakthrough as an opening to encourage states to further formalize the norm proposition – and there were great opportunities to do this at the UNHCR ExCom in June, at the Nansen Conference in September and at the UNHCR ministerial meeting in December. On top of this, 2011 marked the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention. Antonio Guterres – at the time the High Commissioner for Refugees – tried to push the issue of climate-induced migration as part of that celebration (Interview 1.15). These developments suggest that the normative gap was recognized, advocates were eager, and the UNHCR ExCom and ministerial meeting provided an institutional setting that could have catered for a strong and fast acceptance of the norm proposition. Had there also been sufficient political appetite, low levels of contestation, and preferably also an increase in salience, this would have been a major window of opportunity. But it was not. Instead, the UNHCR ministerial meeting deadlocked the issue, which resulted in a large part of the discussions – at least regarding disasters and displacement – being moved out of the UN to the Nansen Initiative.
The failure at this point can be attributed to the lack of an open window and to several simultaneously unfavorable conditions in the other factors. Such as the fear among states of opening up the Refugee Convention as well as a certain “immaturity” in the development of a consensus – meaning that many member states had not yet grasped what the proposed norm was about or its implications. The norm proposition was still too new at this point – and still very unclear. Norm entrepreneurs existed but did not yet have the coordination or capacity to take the proposition forward or the ability to recognize the window. With no clarity or obvious solutions in mind, calls were made for more research and investigations into the “climate change-migration nexus”. The norm proposition was consequently overloaded with considerations early on as a result of its wide scope and complexity.

For instance, the norm proposition of protection was supposed to encompass an extremely wide spectrum of mobility as qualifying for protection: climate change-induced migration and environmental migration, voluntary migration and forced displacement as well as displacement from both slow- and sudden-onset disasters. On top of this, the discussion became increasingly nuanced as it became increasingly evident that: climate-induced migration was deeply intertwined with other types of migration, and thus not easily distinguishable, that it might not always work in the causal directions expected; and, that the massive waves of international “climate refugees” were not the most likely future scenario. This reduced a substantial part of the urgency of the issue, especially as also became increasingly clear that political will to formalize enhanced protection was weak. In addition, at this point, it was not clear how climate-induced migration should be properly addressed. According to Kingdon (1984, 1995, 2011), this means theoretically that advocates could not manage to couple the problem with available alternatives. The political responses consisted largely in calls for further investigation of the climate change-migration relationships. Data collected for this case suggests that this could have been a way of “doing something”, and satisfying the demands of entrepreneurs, while postponing substantial action. Against this backdrop, pushing the specific proposition for some kind of agreement on international protection did not seem to be a promising endeavour and became a very low priority, even on the entrepreneurs’ agendas.

Overall, the assessment finds that there was no viable window opened at this point. Apart from the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention, there were no particular events to help increase the salience of the proposition. On the contrary, the moment was characterized by confusion and the immaturity of the norm proposition.

Developments then took a different turn as discussions temporarily moved out of the UN (and in some respects, had substantially lowered ambitions). Despite a growing body of empirical knowledge and conceptual common ground growing within the Nansen Initiative, the norm proposition struggled in the coming years and little substantial progress was made.
A few years later, advocates of new protection instruments for climate-induced migration had high hopes for the climate conference in Paris in December 2015 (COP21). While displacement was actually mentioned in the final agreement, it was nowhere near a protection standard for climate-induced displacement. Climate migration was tossed back and forth in the different drafts leading up to the final agreement. On at least one occasion it was completely dropped from the draft (Interviews 1.8; 1.11; Milman 2015) but a mentioning of displacement finally made its way into the final agreement. The final wording represents a request to establish a task force “to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change” (UNFCCC 2015b:§50). While advocates were generally relieved to see the paragraph included in the outcome text of the conference (Interviews 1.7; 1.8; 1.10; 1.15), it was yet another call for more research on the subject – and, in a way, back to square one. Moreover, the question of climate-induced migration was negotiated under Loss and damage, which generated additional obstacles.

How can developments in 2015 be understood in terms of contingencies? A historical contextualization highlights other notable chains of events taking place at the same time as the COP21 negotiations were being finalized. Europe was experiencing the largest influx of refugees since the Second World War, at the same time as right-wing populist parties were on the rise in many European states. This reduced the political will to enhance international protection mechanisms in refugee-like situations. Such resistance left little leeway to ensure further and stronger rights for new groups. One might even consider this to be a “negative window”, one where norm-related factors and contingencies aligned in such a way so that norm acceptance was hampered.

Furthermore, the case study material shows how norm advocacy was strongly shaped by the reduced political will. Norm entrepreneurs were prepared and had strong potential to persuade stakeholders and policymakers. However, during the preparations for COP21 they also picked up on the general political sentiments on this issue - and thus aimed no higher than attempting to have human mobility mentioned in the outcome text. Moreover, at this time, the work of the Nansen Initiative had unfolded in parallel with the UN discussions. From the material researched for this study, it is evident that many actors referred to the discussions within the Nansen Initiative, implicitly indicating that policy stakeholders saw this forum as a more attractive way to pursue discussions on this topic. It can thus be assumed that entrepreneurs also saw the Nansen Initiative as a more promising forum for their advocacy. This was the case because states seemed to perceive it in that way, but also because their voice, access and status were stronger there. The Nansen Initiative thus became a convenient way for policymakers to argue that the issue of protection for climate-induced migrants was already being taken care of elsewhere – and an “excuse” for inaction.
Even though none of these moments led to broad and lasting norm acceptance, they can still be understood in relation to contingencies and windows of opportunity: (a) the events of 2007–2008, as a window of opportunity which led to some advancement but failed in terms of wide and lasting norm acceptance; (b) 2011, which had great political potential but when no viable window was opened; and (c) 2015, where the intervening contingencies were such that a “negative window” (from the perspective of the norm proposition) impeded norm success. Interestingly, 2007–2008 is an example of a window that was triggered not by a dramatic event (such as a natural disaster) but rather by a shift in the political discourse (on climate security) and a timely and successful connection to this field. In 2011, a significant boost in the salience of the protection issue might have helped to create a window of opportunity together with the high-level UNHCR summits, as well as meetings such as the Nansen Conference. Instead, resistance, uncertainty and a view that climate-induced migrants were something for the future, came to dominate developments at this point.

The discussion thus far has touched on how the fulfillment (or lack thereof) of several of the first five factors of the framework played a role in shaping the degree to which a window of opportunity could be used to facilitate norm acceptance. A few points bear repeating. Agency is assumed to be crucial in order to advance a norm proposition towards acceptance during a window of opportunity. In this case, the group of norm entrepreneurs was still very small and not yet very coordinated at the start of the window opening in 2007–2008. Nonetheless, they did provide some momentum for the proposition; for instance, through their active efforts to link the proposition to (climate) security and by framing it as the human face of climate change. Furthermore, norm entrepreneurs took advantage of the initial increased openness towards the issue of climate-induced migration to actively lobby for its inclusion in UNFCCC negotiations and frameworks. However, the inclusion at certain venues (especially within the UNFCCC and UNHCR) also led to a great deal of resistance. After the 2011 UNHCR ExCom – a decisive set-back in this norm emergence process – pessimistic outlooks lowered expectations of the possibility of norm acceptance in the years to come, and “took the wind out of the sails” of proponents. In addition, definitions were not sufficiently clarified and common conceptual ground for discussing climate-induced migration not created during the window of opportunity, which left many stakeholders in some confusion.

While the framework has proposed that norm acceptance cannot be understood without considering the role of contingencies and windows of opportunity in norm emergence, the framework has also suggested that it is the joint effect of a combination of factors that is crucial in determining the outcomes of windows of opportunity. The analysis of this case supports this and reminds us that the boost in salience that a contingency might give to a norm proposition is not enough, the fulfillment or maturity of the other factors, as well as
how they evolve and align in the subsequent period of potential change (the window of opportunity), contain the essence of the explanation of norm acceptance – or its absence. The analytical element of contingencies and windows of opportunity has thus helped to reveal some aspects of failed norm acceptance that have previously been difficult to grasp.

In sum, this section has highlighted three particular moments in the process of norm emergence, when there was strong potential for wide and lasting norm acceptance but which failed to result in such an outcome. The next and final section of this case study summarizes the findings, discusses how the analysis sheds light upon the research questions and objectives of this thesis and discusses what the findings of this plausibility probe might lead to in terms of theory development.

6.7. Conclusions on the case of climate-induced migration

What explains the, thus far, stymied norm acceptance in the case of protection for climate-induced migration? Is it plausible that the components of contingencies and windows of opportunity provide important leverage to the explanation? Based on the case study conducted above, using it as the theoretical framework of analysis, several key findings are worth mentioning.

First, consistent with the case study on disaster risk reduction, the analysis of this case also confirms that using the standard approach to explaining norm evolution and acceptance provides an incomplete understanding of the outcome. For instance, the norm life cycle (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998), a key part of the standard approach to norm research, would only have been able to identify that the norm proposition had not reached the phase of a “norm cascade” – despite strong advocacy – but would not have been able to offer detailed explanations for why this was the case. Most importantly, standard approaches to understanding norm evolutions cannot adequately account for the impact of contingencies.

Second, as the summary of factors in Table 7 shows, insufficient fulfillment of these factors can partly account for the lack of broad norm acceptance. However, none of these factors seems able to explain the – so far – unsuccessful norm acceptance in its entirety. This conclusion is partly drawn from the fact that several of these factors have been favorable to norm acceptance, at various moments in the process, but could not achieve success on their own. Norm entrepreneurs were well-respected with access to policymakers and they were highly engaged in the protection norm at times, but that was not sufficient to achieve acceptance. The connections to climate security and the framing of climate-induced migrants as the human face of climate change were helpful at a point in time, but still failed to ensure broader acceptance. Similar
arguments can be made for venue and resistance. The existence of the UNHCR ExCom or the UNFCCC negotiations were not in themselves sufficient as platforms for acceptance or formalization. Nor were times of less resistance and greater political interest. This indicates that these factors – entrepreneurs, the norm itself, framing, venue and resistance – on their own, cannot explain outcomes. They not only combine to shape each other, but also rely on contingencies and windows of opportunity – which, in turn, rely on the sufficient fulfillment of other factors.

Third, the analysis of the importance of contingencies and windows of opportunity reveals three distinct points in time when there was the potential for significant norm advancement and which can be understood in terms of contingencies and windows of opportunity, albeit in different ways. At the first point, in 2007–2008, there was a small window of opportunity that lead to some degree of norm advancement and the eventual introduction of the norm proposition in an UNFCCC setting. At the second point, in 2011, the UNHCR tried to persuade the UNHCR ExCom to commit further to protection norms for climate-induced migration. The analysis shows, however, that there was no window of opportunity at this time – which suggests a reason why it was difficult to achieve norm advancement at this point. The third point, in the fall of 2015, presented some promising circumstances – such as the Nansen Global Consultations and COP 21 in Paris. Instead, contingencies in the societal and political landscape were such that a negative window was produced – leading to less norm advancement than had been previously been hoped for.

| Agency | A small and well-coordinated group of norm entrepreneurs have had access to policy makers, but their support for the norm proposition eventually declined as the prospects for success were limited and compromises over content were reached. |
| The norm itself | The proposition was negatively affected throughout the process by unresolved uncertainties over definition, scope, causal relationships and complexity. |
| Framing | The proposition was clearly connected to norms on climate change, migration and security, and has been framed as the human face of climate change. These connections seem to have had a positive effect in drawing political attention to the proposition and putting it on the agenda, but a negative effect on gaining acceptance of the proposed norm, due to the sensitive connotations of some of these issue-areas. |
| Venue | The proposition has found a type of institutional home within UNHCR, the IOM and to some extent within the UNFCCC. However, only a small number of officials regularly deal with the norm proposition. In addition, UNHCR member states have been reluctant to |
formalize the norm and it was questioned whether the UNFCCC was a beneficial setting for negotiations.

**Resistance**
There were high levels of resistance and polarization regarding the desirability of this proposition which proved negative for its acceptance.

**Contingencies**
Three particular moments in the process constituted: a window with some positive effects but which failed to lead to norm acceptance (2007–2008); a non-window (2011); and a negative window (2015). Lack of clarity and of available alternatives, as well as a failure to link the proposition to contingencies that could increase salience seem to account for a large part of these outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7. Evaluation of factors in the case of climate-induced migration</th>
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<tr>
<td>The normative claim to ensure international protection for climate-induced migrants evokes several intriguing questions. Why did this proposition – which seemed so righteous in relation to human rights and urgent in relation to the increased consequences climate change, and which was the buzz word for actors on climate security for a number of years – fail to gain international acceptance? Realist arguments on national sovereignty (as an antipole to assigning new asylum rights), as well as more general arguments on the lack of political will seem to have played a role – but are not able to provide a satisfying account of the developments over time. For instance, if there was a lack of political will – what lies behind that lack of will and how can it be understood in context? What about all those advocates who strongly argued in favour of filling the normative gap in protection? Why were they not successful in pursuing their calls for change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against the background of the framework constructed for this thesis, the analysis on this case has gone into detail on several aspects related to norm emergence and acceptance, and has confirmed that it is plausible that the aspect of contingencies adds new, highly important explanatory elements. In addition, the understanding of contingences in this framework, including how they trigger windows and when windows are productive, also helps us to understand points of failed or insufficient norm advancement and acceptance. This particular case also provides specific insights into the mechanisms at work in non-windows or negative windows. The section on contingencies above has already described and analyzed the particular dynamics at works at each of the three moments of potential change highlighted here. Therefore, the remainder of this section particularly emphasizes a few additional aspects – specifically regarding norm clarity, venue, resistance and the seizure of windows, which all seem to have been particularly unhelpful in this case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The discussions regarding this norm proposition were consistently infused with definitional debates and uncertainties around the phenomenon, not to mention differences regarding whether climate-induced migrants should be</td>
</tr>
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seen and handled as a separate group of migrants or not – thereby fundamen-
tally questioning the rationale of the proposed norm. These persistent difficul-
ties in clarifying the norm and achieving unity on definitions seem to have had a
great impedimentary effect on norm acceptance in this case. Policymakers have had a hard time grasping what the norm proposition was about and how it should be properly addressed. Not even among the key entrepreneurs and most important organizations involved was there complete unity over definitions. This was the result of different institutional traditions within the organizations (for example regarding the scope of “migration” vs “displacement”) and a desire to do the norm proposition justice by encompassing the complexity and diversity of the phenomena and the required solutions.

Norm entrepreneurs in this case primarily consisted of practitioners in the UNHCR, the IOM and the Nansen Initiative, as well as a small, active group of academics. While one of their strengths was their direct access to policy-
makers and states in different ways, their positions also required them to func-
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Norm entrepreneurs in this case primarily consisted of practitioners in the UNHCR, the IOM and the Nansen Initiative, as well as a small, active group of academics. While one of their strengths was their direct access to policy-makers and states in different ways, their positions also required them to function more as message than norm entrepreneurs. This meant that in their coordinating and bureaucratic roles, several of these key actors had had to concentrate on creating consensus around the norm or at least shaping it into some-
thing politically feasible. This had to take priority over efforts to safeguard the original content of the norm, which a norm entrepreneur with looser connections to the policy process might be more inclined to do (for more on message entrepre

The low level of political appetite for accepting a protection norm on cli-
mate-induced migration was demonstrated by different kinds of resistance over the years. The case analysis shows that such resistance was a contributory factor to the developments in both 2011 and 2015, but also how neglect, de-prioritization and “agenda-exclusion” (Bloomfield and Scott 2017a; Tallberg 2003) have been at least as powerful forms of resistance as outspoken opposi-
tion. The obstacles of de-prioritization are also demonstrated in the analysis on venue, as it was difficult for this norm proposition to navigate one of the most important venues in later years – the UNFCCC. The scope of the UN-
FCCC is enormous, making it difficult for a new norm proposition to gain lasting attention and priority. In addition, loss and damage (the section under

Finally, the analysis shows that compared to the case of disaster risk reduc-
tion, this case shows that catastrophes were not made effective use of in the
same way in order to try to open up windows of opportunity. Possible boosts
in salience thus failed to come and, when they did, they suffered from major “coupling” problems (Kingdon 1995) – meaning that there were no comprehensible and feasible solutions for policymakers to consider. There was, however, much to learn from this, and a case epilogue in the concluding chapter reflects on the developments after 2015, as well as possible paths that this norm proposition could take in the future.

In sum, this case study evaluated the plausibility of the framework developed in this thesis. The case analysis set out to examine whether the framework was also suitable for explaining cases of failed norm acceptance. The main finding was that while the first five factors demonstrated some deficits that seem to have been unhelpful to norm acceptance, the process-oriented analysis suggests that there were also times when these factors were favorable. To fully unveil the combinational effect of the factors and the obstacles that this norm proposition encountered during its emergence, the factor of contingencies and windows of opportunity provides critical explanatory value and seems to account for the “missing factor” that is required in order to adequately understand the outcome. This component shows that there was no lack of moments of potential change in this case, but these windows came at the wrong time, without other sufficiently developed factors, and thus did not result in a successful outcome.
7. Conclusions: toward an improved understanding of norm acceptance

This thesis set out to understand different levels of norm acceptance in international politics. It established that the prevailing standard approach to explain norm evolution spearheaded by Finnemore & Sikkink’s (1998) norm life cycle, was insufficient and suffered from a number of critical deficits. These deficits concerned an underspecified norm emergence stage, too little account of agency (concerning the view that norm evolution beyond a certain point is principally axiomatic) and a lack of attention to norm resistance. Most importantly, however, it failed to theorize the elements of intervening contingencies – thereby ignoring a possibly essential explanation for outcomes of norm acceptance.

This thesis has striven to remedy this by creating a novel theoretical framework that builds in and theorizes the importance of contingencies in the norm acceptance process. The framework suggested how contingencies dynamically interact with other factors in order to produce successful outcomes from the windows of opportunity that such contingencies can create. Subsequently, the thesis used two contemporary norm propositions connected to the field of climate change politics (disaster risk reduction and protection for climate-induced migration) to probe the plausibility of this new theoretical framework.

The case study on disaster risk reduction provided an example of how a natural catastrophe which coincided with an already planned and prepared summit on the subject interacted to propel disaster risk reduction to the top of the political agenda and toward norm acceptance. The case concerning international protection for climate-induced migrants showed how three particular moments in time had promising potential to advance the norm toward greater acceptance but largely failed because there were no solutions to act on, and because either no viable window opened up to drive further attention and ultimate acceptance or there was a negative window.

The nature of these two cases is such that their respective processes are both particularly prone to be affected by external events, but they have not been affected in the same way. The analysis conducted according to the framework shows how events must be actively connected to a specific norm proposition and how they must be aligned with other factors that determine the success of a norm, defined in this study as norm acceptance.
This chapter draws out the key findings and broader implications of this study. Specifically, the chapter specifies the theoretical implications for different strands of the literature as well as implications for the understanding of the empirical cases under study. Finally, the chapter aims to establish the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed framework and to suggest ways to take it forward.

7.1. Key findings

The two cases with contrasting outcomes under examination here complement each other with valuable insights on whether, and if so how, contingencies matter for norm acceptance. While the in-depth analysis in chapters 5 and 6 illuminates a wide array of interesting aspects of norm emergence and acceptance, this section concentrates on drawing out the most crucial for theory development.

First, a central finding is that contingencies enhance understanding of norm acceptance in successful as well as in stagnated cases. Second, it is not contingencies in themselves that automatically produce norm change. The case studies rather suggest that they function as triggers of moments of potential change, here referred to as windows of opportunity. These windows, in turn, cannot be utilized unless the other factors in the framework are favorable, have reached a certain level of maturity or are improved with the help of the window. Contingencies thus dynamically interact with the other factors to produce norm acceptance. Third, among the other factors of the framework (agency, the norm itself, framing, venue and resistance), the clarity of the norm and the existence of venues appear to have particular influence over the norm emergence process and the productivity of windows – albeit in slightly different ways than expected (as is described below).

The plausibility probes that the case studies constitute support the validity of the expectation that contingencies and windows of opportunity give crucial added value to understanding norm acceptance. None of the case outcomes could have been fully understood by only considering the first five variables in the framework. The added value comes from the fact that contingencies and windows of opportunity provide insights into why a new norm proposition would be prioritized in an otherwise crowded international political agenda, something that the other factors cannot individually address. They also provide the analyst with an additional explanatory variable, where other more traditional explanations of norm emergence outcomes fall short. Moreover, this analytic dimension reveals the combined effects of the other factors and touches on the relationship between norm emergence and the policy process. As such, it shows why some contingencies matter in the norm acceptance process while other contingencies have little or no effect. Third, norm emergence is a process that evolves over time and the variations in the different factors
can shift along the way. A systematic account of contingencies and windows of opportunity allows the analyst to see the influence of how different factors vary over time, and how their combined effects at certain points determine outcomes in the long run. It thus has the potential to provide a process-oriented historical explanation of norm acceptance.

The theoretical framework proposed that contingencies primarily impact outcomes of norm acceptance by triggering windows of opportunity. The case analyses strengthen that proposal and show how different variables must be or become favorable during this window, meaning that they interact and align with each other in order to advance norm acceptance. The disaster risk reduction case suggested that the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami placed unprecedented attention on the issues of disaster risk and prevention, but it was the coincidence with the pre-planned conference in Kobe that propelled norm acceptance. The conference gave stakeholders an opportunity to immediately take action on disaster risk reduction and was quickly tied to continuing work on the topic and further commitments on the Sendai Framework (HFA2) 10 years later. The case of disaster risk reduction illustrates how several factors had sufficiently matured when this major contingency intervened. The conference in particular represents the preparedness of and preparations by norm entrepreneurs who actively linked the tsunami to disaster risk issues and the conference in Kobe, and to the existence of a functioning and devoted venue to cater for the norm.

The disaster risk reduction case showed how similar kinds of contingencies (such natural disasters) did not have the same effect on this norm proposition. In this case, the contingencies that have arisen have not been so strongly linked to the norm emergence process and there have not been any available alternatives (such as feasible policy proposals) to turn to in the same way. Apart from the small window of opportunity in 2007–2008, when there was heightened salience and brief progress made on the issue but no substantial “norm cascade” or lasting change, the case of disaster risk reduction also demonstrated an example of a crucial moment in time when a potential window never opened (that is, at the 2011 UNHCR ExCom negotiations) as well as a “negative window” (when the contextual factors in 2015 created strong resistance to enhanced protection mechanisms). In this way, the plausibility probes have demonstrated how consideration of contingencies and windows of opportunity can be used to provide deeper and richer understanding of both successful and unsuccessful cases of norm acceptance.

It is mentioned above that the first five factors in the framework also proved to be of importance to norm acceptance, but it is crucial to note that none alone can adequately account for the outcomes. That said, the case studies indicate some findings regarding some of these factors that are of particular importance to highlight.

To begin with, the clarity of the norm proposition and common definitions regarding its content, aim and scope have been crucial for the prospects for
advancing norm acceptance during windows of opportunity or the possibilities of opening such windows. However, and somewhat counterintuitive to theoretical expectations, it does not seem as if norm complexity and wide scope were unsurmountable hurdles. This is indicated by the case material on disaster risk reduction. The norm proposition on disaster risk reduction is both highly complex and wide in scope – it touches on several policy areas, it is infused with uncertainty and unpredictability, and it covers a range of possible measures. Nonetheless, this does not seem to have been a hindrance to the disaster risk reduction process as entrepreneurs actively – and successfully – worked to create a common language and a common terminology around the issue.

Moreover, technical assistance from the research community – highlighted by UNISDR in the Global Assessment Reports – has also helped in specifying disaster risk and how it can be handled. There is a general idea in research on norms and policy that “complex ideas don’t diffuse”, but this study shows that a common terminology is more important than simplicity or narrowness of scope. It seems as if such a “common language” can help to overcome eventual complexities and provide clarity and order over the content of the norm. The work on terminology was initiated by UNISDR before 2005 but the opportunity provided by newfound, heightened interest was seized and the work on a common language was further solidified in work carried out after 2005 - for the Sendai Framework. This further suggests that very strong, perhaps extreme, contingencies can open up windows so strong that they can somewhat outweigh deficits in other factors. If so, the opportunity should be seized to improve those factors during the opened window in order to produce norm acceptance.

For the case of climate-induced migration, lack of clarity and a lack of unified definitions seem to have been major impediments to norm acceptance. Like disaster risk reduction, climate-induced migration has also touched on many different phenomena, in this case different kinds of migration with different origins – even though they all are environment-related. While many attempts were made by the community on climate-induced migration to reach unified definitions, the definitional debate remained fragmented. One reason for this is that the various major actors on the issue (such as UNHCR, the IOM and the Nansen Initiative) have somewhat different views on the scope of the issue that should be addressed and what should be included in the concept of migration (in relation to displacement). Looking at the two cases side by side, the case evidence suggests that it might not be the complexity of the norm proposition that is the greatest impediment to norm acceptance – the lack of common terminology seems to be a bigger problem.

Another important aspect appears to be the influence that norm entrepreneurs have over definitions and over safeguarding the content of the norm proposition. For disaster risk reduction, there was one major norm entrepreneur (UNISDR) with strong institutional and technical capacities that had the
ability to exercise strong influence over terminology, language and definitions. For climate-induced migration, there were several equally strong entrepreneurs with slightly different understandings of the norm proposition, which led to difficulties settling on a common scope and terminology.

The dynamic importance of the factor of the norm itself is thus closely connected not only to entrepreneurs and agency, but also to venue. The case evidence demonstrates how a clear and devoted institutional platform in the case of disaster risk reduction was a crucial vehicle for creating and diffusing common terminology and definitions and thus clarifications of the norm proposition. Institutional capacity thus ameliorated the complexity that would otherwise be expected to hinder norm acceptance. The norm proposition on protecting climate-induced migration did not have the same obvious all-encompassing platform to diffuse such common language.54

Research on contingencies and windows of opportunity has sometimes been criticized on the grounds that such events are impossible to predict and are thus not amenable to predictive theory. The analysis in this thesis, however, suggests that some degree of prediction is possible with regard to the theorizing of contingencies. For instance, while norm entrepreneurs cannot calculate exactly when a window will open, they can be relatively certain that some type of window will open at some point in the process. The leverage then lies in preparations for the potential window to be properly seized. The norm entrepreneurs should be aware of what types of contingency are likely to open a window, what a window would look like (in order to recognize it) and how to be prepared (that is, to work on creating awareness and clarifications regarding the content of the norm, to prepare possible alternatives and solutions, and to create channels for access to policy makers) and, when the time comes, be ready to activate appropriate linkages and highlight possible solutions.

This thesis set out to propose an analytical tool that could be used to further enhance our understanding of norm acceptance. More specifically, the thesis asked whether there was an imperative added value in incorporating contingencies into the analytical framework, and sought to theorize and probe their potential impact. The new framework together with the two case analyses has shown that incorporating contingencies as a factor of analysis does add explanatory value. More interestingly, the study shows that contingencies have great influence over the norm acceptance process, but only if the contingency triggers a window of opportunity, through the recognition and seizure of that

54 One of the main goals of the Nansen Initiative was to create consensus around a conceptual framework regarding disaster displacement through regional and global consultations (The Nansen Initiative 2015c). This has, however, not been directly applied outside this particular forum as it is specifically focused on forced displacement by disasters and the outside community has not yet settled on the precise scope of the norm proposition.
opportunity by norm entrepreneurs; and if there is a positive alignment with other factors.

Contingencies can also improve understanding of failed cases of norm acceptance by exposing the lack of contingencies intervening with a particular norm process, the lack of effective use of the contingency in order to open a window, or an “unproductive” window. An unproductive window can, as the study suggests, be explained by the immaturity of the norm emergence process or by failed alignment with the other factors. As the case study on climate-induced migration shows, windows might also be negative, meaning that the contingency is such that it makes the norm proposition and its solutions seem less desirable rather than increase its salience in a positive manner. With this new framework at hand, the thesis has been able to suggest plausible explanations for the theoretical inquiry of the thesis – why there were such contrasting outcomes for the two cases of disaster risk reduction and climate-induced migration.

Another aspect that further illustrates the point that contingencies must not only occur, but must also be seized and linked to the norm proposition, is that both disaster risk reduction and climate-induced migration could be expected to be affected by similar kinds of contingencies. Yet, many of the events that have intervened in the process on disaster risk reduction and heightened the salience of that norm proposition in various ways have not had the same effect on the process of climate-induced migration. For instance, UNHCR did make attempts to connect the Indian Ocean tsunami to climate-induced displacement when the High Commissioner for Refugees requested states to suspend forced returns to affected areas. The request was met with some sympathy but did not have any long-term effect or diffuse to other situations (Goodwin-Gill and McAdam 2017) – possibly because the norm proposition was not developed enough, there was no natural venue or no available solutions or measures to act on. Disasters have continued to displace a large number of people each year – 26.4 million each year since 2008 according to IDMC estimates (Yonetani 2015). However, particular events, such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005 or the Sichuan earthquake in China in 2008 (which itself displaced more than 1 million people) were surprisingly rarely made use of or referred to in the material on this case.

Against this background, this study argues that contingencies, and a theorization of moments of potential change or windows of opportunity, should always be included in explanatory tools on norm acceptance. Important explanatory aspects might otherwise be missed.
7.2. General implications for theory

At the more general level, the puzzle that spurred this study concerned why some norms succeed in gaining acceptance in the international community while others do not.

While future studies must demonstrate the generalizability of these claims over different issue-areas, there is nothing inherent in the framework that limits it or makes it specific only to climate security norms. On the contrary, the character of the framework and the factors are such that it should be directly applicable to tests on any type of norm in the international system.

The existing literature has had a difficult time disentangling and theoretically encompassing what happens at the “tipping point”; that is, when a norm proposition moves from being just a proposal under consideration to gain broader acceptance. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) have described it as the norm tipping into a “cascade”. One of the main theoretical contributions of this thesis to the norm dynamics literature is that it theorizes what happens at such a tipping point; namely, what might account for the “invisible” forces pushing a norm proposition over the edge. This thesis suggests that the tipping point consists of a complex set of dynamics, a microcosm of its own that is triggered by contingencies and in which key factors affecting norm acceptance intersect. This thesis has gone further than just recognizing the fact that contingent elements, external events or windows of opportunity of some sort play a role (as was done in, for example, in Björkdahl 2002; Jose 2017 and Wunderlich 2013). This thesis has theorized and suggested how contingencies matter for norm emergence and how windows of opportunity may or may not be productive.

The findings here clearly demonstrate that agency plays a major role in these processes. This is true throughout the norm emergence process as a whole, but in particular during a window of opportunity when agency is required to help tip a norm proposition toward acceptance. In relation to previous research, this counters those theories that illustrate norm acceptance as a more or less axiomatic process where the inherent appropriateness of a certain norm makes it unstoppable after a certain point. The results from this thesis provide support to the idea that actor intention and strategic agency are key driving forces that guide and push a norm proposition toward norm acceptance in a crowded international policy agenda. Norm entrepreneurs are key to identifying norm gaps, in defining and formulating the norm proposition and in safeguarding its content (or reshaping it in order to achieve consensus). Moreover, in formulating the norm and promoting its content, entrepreneurs make use of linkages to other norms and issue-areas and are thus key in its framing – which, in turn, determines the most suitable venue. This thesis further suggests that for a contingency to lead to an open window of opportunity, actors must seize the contingency and actively link it to the specific norm proposition. If not, as the cases studied here show, contingencies tend to have little or
no effect on the norm acceptance process. Actors can also substantially heighten the probability of a window leading to an advance in norm acceptance if they have made preparations; for example, through making the norm proposition known to stakeholders and by preparing possible alternatives for action. Nonetheless, while this thesis argues that agency plays an essential role in norm acceptance, agents do not operate freely. Structural factors, such as pre-existing norms, policy agendas, available venues and institutional arrangements or public sentiment, limit and condition the leeway for action that actors can take and the effect their actions have.

The findings here regarding agency link to a broader discussion on actors and norm entrepreneurs. These cases suggest a wider understanding of, and perhaps a shift in focus on, who should be considered a norm entrepreneur than is traditional. To the extent that interest groups and NGOs played a role in these norm emergence processes, they did so at a very initial phase. They seem to have quickly disappeared from the scene or to have kept a low profile. The cases do not indicate that these kinds of lobbying groups had such a meaningful persuasion role as was traditionally suggested in the literature. Instead, these cases reveal a greater entrepreneurship role for international organizations’ agencies and secretariats, and the academic community. However, this introduces other kinds of complexities and problems – especially regarding the different roles that these actors are expected to play. The interview material for both cases studied here shows that practitioners within the main organizations working on disaster risk reduction or climate-induced migration function as norm entrepreneurs, initiating and advocating for the norm proposition; message entrepreneurs, aimed at creating consensus regarding the norm proposition (Fukuda-Parr and Hulme 2011); experts; and civil servants.

The role of the academic community, as mentioned above, leads on to a discussion of the implications of this study for research on epistemic communities. Epistemic communities are knowledge communities around a certain subject which can use their knowledge and networks to take ownership of concepts and issues, and with more or less intention to promote their views and “truth-claims” (see for example Haas 1992). We can see that the epistemic communities connected to these two norm propositions have been active in different ways. Scientific communities, especially from the fields of geography, meteorology and the natural sciences, were part of turning the spotlight on disasters in the 1970s and 1980s. Since then, however, scientific actors have functioned as technical assistants (for example through providing input and research to the Global Assessment Reports) rather than entrepreneurs for the norm. In the case of climate-induced migration, on the other hand, several academics have been highly active in promoting different agendas around the norm proposition. Many of them have also been closely involved with the policy actors. However, there has been a long-standing divide between different epistemic communities – especially with regard to the maximalists/minimal-
ists and the alarmists/skeptics (see chapter 6). At the broader level, this suggests that epistemic communities might be important norm entrepreneurs but that they are of most “use” to the norm acceptance process if they provide technical assistance and if they are not too internally divided (which would impede norm clarification). That said, some – perhaps many – norm propositions may be such that a differentiated academic and scientific discussion is necessary. This will, however, prolong processes in which the norm’s content, definition and objectives are clarified – and thus delay norm acceptance.

This study has argued that norm emergence in the international community is closely connected to the dynamics of traditional policy processes, and the results of this study also improve knowledge also on global governance. This study emphasizes the importance of understanding how essential norms and their evolution are to global governance. In addition, the content of a norm as well as its progression and framing are closely interlinked and co-constitutive with the policy process. More specifically, the study provides insights for research on the internal dynamics of international institutions and organizations. One insight, as mentioned above, is the complicated importance of international organizations’ secretariats as norm entrepreneurs, which touches on their autonomy as actors in international politics – a problematique discussed by, for example, Barnett and Finnemore (1999). Another insight is the importance of dedicated venues with regular summits or opportunities for the discussions that are required for norm progression.

Having stated the key findings of this thesis as well as the more general implications for the norm literature and other strands of research, the chapter now revisits the two cases which functioned as plausibility probes: disaster risk reduction and climate-induced migration.

### 7.3. Epilogue on disaster risk reduction

This chapter has already discussed how the specific framework developed for this thesis has revealed aspects of the norm acceptance processes of disaster risk reduction and climate-induced migration which had not previously been brought to the forefront in the scholarly literature on these cases. The cases are contemporary, they emerged in the 1980s and this study followed them up until 2015. The fact that they are so recent means that there might still be room for further developments, and the knowledge gained from this study can be used to reflect on what will be important for the cases in the future and what challenges lies ahead.

While the norm proposition to reduce disaster risk has been widely accepted at this point, there are still some steps that need to be taken for the norm to be fully implemented at all levels. After the adoption of the Sendai Framework in 2015, work commenced to decide on how to compel states to achieve the specified targets and to agree on indicators to measure progress.
This thesis has shown not only that contingencies have had a great influence over the emergence of disaster risk reduction, but more importantly how such mechanisms work. While the impact of the Indian Ocean tsunami on disaster risk issues has been well known to practitioners and mentioned in scholarly work on the subject, earlier research had not considered how and why on a deeper level. For instance, even if the tsunami was a disaster on an unprecedented scale in terms of loss of human life and material assets, as well as geographic scope, the results suggests that it would not have had the same effect on norm acceptance if there was not already a prepared alternative, in terms of the Second World Conference and the drafted Hyogo Framework, for policymakers to consider. In addition, this thesis has shown that a devoted and mandated venue, and a common language were crucial – suggesting that it would be a good option for practitioners wanting to promote and continue to diffuse disaster risk reduction in the future to safeguard the role of the UNISDR and the common terminology developed.

In general, disaster risk reduction continues to be uncontroversial but risks de-prioritization in relation to other political issues, especially when it comes to the work that is required for full implementation. Indeed, implementation of the Sendai Framework and its seven global targets is the next great challenge for the accepted norm to be translated into a fully internalized norm. Since agreement on the Sendai Framework in 2015, states have been busy negotiating the indicators through which each state will report its progress on the seven targets. This has not been an entirely uncontroversial process. While the goals are settled through the targets, it has been strenuous to agree on how many and which indicators should be used to measure fulfillment, and at what pace states should commit to doing this (Interview 2.2), that is, how to make all governments implement the measures needed in order to actually reduce disaster risk.

Moreover, it will be interesting to see how much – and in what ways – disaster risk reduction will be influenced by contingencies during the implementation process. For instance, if disastrous events intervene and are linked to risk reduction – will that speed up the implementation process? Several interviewees expressed concern about the unusually severe hurricane season of 2017, and pointed out that this might once again increase the salience of disaster risk and perhaps further solidify the norm.

7.4. Epilogue on climate-induced migration

When the time frame of this study ended in 2015, climate-induced migration had just been mentioned in a sub-document to the Paris Agreement, establishing a task force “to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change” (UNFCCC 2015b). While the norm proposition was still far
from being accepted, this was considered an advance in the sense that the issue – having been subject to political controversy – was at all mentioned at all in the outcome text of COP 21 in Paris. On the other hand, it was considered a disappointment that states were not ready to take a clearer stance on climate-induced migration. The final phrasing did not promise any intent or commitment to enhance protection mechanisms and was nothing more than a suggestion for further study of the subject.

In terms of norm acceptance, it will be very interesting to follow the work of this task force and – in particular – how its recommendations are received. Several interviewees expressed cautious enthusiasm regarding the creation of the task force. The task force is inclusive in that its members represent a range of international organizations and agencies with different perspectives. In addition, it might provide the issue with a devoted setting for discussion in which more unified definitions can be agreed on. This in itself might bring about a new wave of enthusiasm among norm entrepreneurs, as this could be seen as new pathways and prospects for advocacy opening up. The task force is to deliver its first set of recommendations at COP 24 in December 2018. However, the political landscape is still not such that it is open to enhanced international protection and asylum rights. If the recommendations lean towards such suggestions, they are likely to be met with resistance. However, as this thesis has taught us, windows of opportunity may open unexpectedly and members of the task force would thus be right to be ready to seize possible contingencies and to prepare alternatives and solutions.

The case analysis in chapter 6 concluded that one of the main problems for norm acceptance on climate-induced migration was the lack of a devoted venue where there was a focus and priority on pursuing discussions regarding the norm proposition. One platform for consultations and discussions was the Nansen Initiative, which managed to compile the recommendations and exchanges of best practices from their regional and global consultations in a “Protection Agenda” (The Nansen Initiative 2015a). However, the Nansen Initiative concluded its work in 2015 with this agenda and a successor arrangement, the Platform for Disaster Displacement, was later established. The Platform aims to implement the recommendations of the “Protection Agenda” and thus has more of a practical focus. In relation to the focus of this study, it is important to note, however, that the Nansen Initiative and the Platform for Disaster Displacement are not about creating new norms or new protection mechanisms, but rather about illuminating the bilateral and regional practices

56 https://unfccc.int/node/285#eq-2, accessed 18 June 18
that already exist. Nonetheless, the work initiated there and the foundation established could well have positive effects on other, external, processes.

Since the time frame of this study ended in 2015, two new interlinked institutional settings have emerged in which advocates place high hopes: the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and a proposed Global Compact on Refugees. Both are follow-up arrangements to the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants of 2016. The global compacts aim to improve the governance of migration and there will be an international conference in December 2018 in which the Global Compact on Migration is expected to be adopted as an international agreement. Practitioners have noted that the global compacts might be a more suitable venue for pursuing normative advances on climate-induced migration protection issues (Interviews 1.8; 1.16). For instance, the New York Declaration – which initiated the work on the global compacts – mentions that, with regard to migrants in countries experiencing natural disasters, it takes note of the “Protection Agenda” of the Nansen Initiative (United Nations General Assembly 2016:§50).

Time will tell whether the global compacts constitute venues in which norm acceptance on protection issues for climate-induced migration can be pursued. One risk might be that conceptual and definitional issues have not yet been clarified by the conference in December, or that climate-related migration might not be prioritized enough even in this setting. Moreover, it should be ensured that the work of the task force and that of the Global Compact is coordinated, and both aimed at the same targets in order to strengthen the norm proposition. Interestingly, Dina Ionesco and Mariam Traore Chazalnoel from the climate change and migration department at the IOM, have called the implementation of the Paris Agreement (meaning the creation of the task force) and the setting offered within the global compacts a “moment of opportunity”, while not drawing further on the concept theoretically (Traore Chazalnoel and Ionesco 2018).

In sum, as the continuing history of this norm proposition plays out, there are lessons from this study that might assist advocates and practitioners. First, the actors involved should focus on creating a common terminology with clear definitions of the norm proposition. Second, advocates should make better use of technical assistance, such as the IDMC figures and modeling on displacement, to support their claims. Third, advocates should safeguard the venues, especially within the global compacts, to create a space for discussion of climate-induced migration of different kinds. Finally, and most importantly, actors wanting to work to advance the norm on protection for climate-induced migrants should be well-prepared to seize upcoming contingencies, that is, to link them to the norm proposition and highlight available alternatives and solutions.

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7.5. Richer explanations for norm acceptance: lessons learned and the way forward

This section concludes the thesis with a discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed framework and reflects on how this thesis can provide a stepping stone for future studies on norm acceptance in the international community. In so doing, this section discusses the limitations of the study and suggests how the results could be further strengthened (or challenged) in future studies. It also discusses how the empirical results from this study can be used to refine some of the operationalizations made in the framework.

The core strength of this framework is that it highlights a previously neglected component in norm evolution and shows how it influences the norm acceptance process. In doing so, the framework and the plausibility probes remedy the four deficits of the standard approaches outlined in chapter 2. It offers a more detailed account of the norm emergence stage, demonstrates the central importance of agency (even when structural and contextual factors intervene) and further theorizes the aspects of resistance and contingency. Moreover, the framework provides the analyst with an explanatory – rather than a descriptive – tool for norm analysis.\(^{59}\)

The case studies conducted here make an important contribution to the existing policy-related literature on disaster risk reduction and climate-induced migration. They do so in terms of the composition and, in some respects, uniqueness of the empirical material, as well as the new theoretical insights offered for understanding these particular cases.

This study has thus provided a rich understanding of the cases at hand – on both successful and less successful cases of norm acceptance. Nonetheless, a larger study with more cases – preferably from different issue-areas – would be desirable in order to further test and strengthen the robustness of the framework.

Another weakness, albeit one that afflicts any theoretically-driven framework, is the possible explanatory factors or dimensions that are left out. In this case, the framework could be criticized on the grounds that it does not explicitly account for power or material interests. Power relations are important in international politics and some might argue that norms supported by powerful states might have a higher likelihood of being accepted. However, while there are few explicit references to power in this study, this dimension does enter the discussion through the focus on agency and resistance, and how these influence both the content and the definition of the norm proposition, as well as the framing and the venue. We have also seen, especially in the case of disaster risk reduction, that material interests, economic arguments and cost-benefit calculations did seem to matter. Much of the material suggests that acceptance

\(^{59}\) As was described in chapter 4, “explanations” should here be understood as qualitative conjectures rather than causal determinants or “proofs” (Spencer, Ritchie, O’Connor, et al. 2014).
of disaster risk reduction accelerated when states began to realize the costs of not adequately addressing disaster risk. However, these arguments seem to have had an ameliorating effect on resistance, rather than acting as a driving force in themselves – as a more rational logic would suggest.

This detailed framework and the in-depth case analyses have spurred a number of new questions and generated suggestions regarding how the framework and its factors could be refined and used in the future. The most interesting aspects concern the number of norm entrepreneurs, the complexity of the norm and what kind of resistance is most important, in addition to additional theorizing about when contingencies matter and whether particularly strong factors can compensate for deficits in other factors. The remainder of this section discusses suggestions on how to further refine these factors.

In terms of agency, the theoretical framework suggested that the number of norm entrepreneurs mattered for norm acceptance. While more advocates can naturally conduct more activities, the plausibility probes do not show that the number of entrepreneurs is of great importance. Instead, the coordination and unity of the existing group of norm entrepreneurs seem to be much more important. Future assessment of this factor should thus concentrate more on this aspect than the number of entrepreneurs.

The framework also suggested that complexity and a wide scope would be damaging for the prospects of a norm’s acceptance. As is discussed above, the case studies instead indicate that complexity and wide scope can be overcome by a large institutional capacity to encompass a wide-ranging norm proposition. This institutional capacity, and the existence of a dedicated venue, can help specify and unify definitions regarding the norm proposition and thus create a common terminology that constitutes an important foundation for the advancement of the norm. It could, however, be interesting for future case studies to look further into whether this also goes the other way, that is, if a norm proposition with low complexity and a narrow scope is not as dependent on unified definitions.

In contrast to the emphasis on norm entrepreneurs, a specific focus on resistance has arisen relatively late in the norm literature and was one of the more recent contributions to the framework. The framework suggested that resistance varied on a spectrum from no resistance to lack of support to subtle resistance and finally outspoken resistance. With the insights provided from the plausibility probes, there might be good reason to alter this view. Future studies should not regard lack of support or subtle resistance – that is, neglect, exclusion and de-prioritization – as milder forms of resistance. Instead, a greater understanding and focus on these types of resistance to norm acceptance should be developed as such resistance – at least in these cases – seems to have been the most frequently used and most refined. It is not necessarily true that subtle resistance is less forceful than outspoken resistance – partly because it is more difficult to counteract. The framework also suggested that low level (but not absent) resistance prolonged norm acceptance while a
high level of resistance substantially prolonged or prevented norm acceptance. Given the results from the plausibility probes, this statement still holds in principle. However, the case studies suggest that resistance can be strongly affected (in both ways) by contingencies and windows of opportunity, which should be kept in mind. Depending on the strength and nature of the window of opportunity, resistance may be quickly reduced or – in some instances – increased, during this period of potential change.

Further on the question of contingencies, there are a few aspects that might be of particular interest to studies seeking to further enhance knowledge on how contingencies and norms interact. First, this thesis suggested that contingencies are critical to norm acceptance, but did not go so far as to argue that they are a necessary condition. Future studies could look further into this to ask whether contingencies (and successful windows) are necessary to norm acceptance; and, if they are not, under what conditions they are not necessary. Can there be success without contingencies and windows? Along the same strand of thought, it could be asked whether there are specific types of norm propositions that are more dependent on contingencies for their success than others. The framework indicated that norm propositions that required more fundamental change could be more dependent on contingent effects (because of path dependency). However, the results from the case studies do not point in a clear direction on this matter, and future studies could help to specify this further.

Finally, it has already been mentioned that the importance of venue might compensate for the difficulties of promoting a complex and wide-ranging norm proposition. It would be interesting to look further into these dynamic relationships between the factors, and disentangle whether or how strength in certain factors can compensate for or outweigh deficits in others.

* * *

In sum, this thesis has suggested ways to further enrich understandings of norm acceptance. In probing the plausibility of the theoretical expectations, the thesis has also improved the empirical understanding of the cases of disaster risk reduction and climate-induced migration. In the future, the framework suggested and probed here can be used on any case of norm emergence in the international system and is expected to reveal novel dimensions that have not previously been sufficiently accounted for.

This final chapter of the thesis has summarized the thesis, discussed its key findings and connected them to existing theory on norm dynamics. Moreover, the chapter has described recent developments in the empirical cases since this study ended. In doing so, the chapter also looked forward to the developments we might expect to see in the future in the cases of disaster risk reduction and climate-induced migration, and what lessons might be learned by practitioners and advocates wanting to further enhance acceptance of these propositions. In
the final section, the chapter reflected on further refinement of the factors of the framework and suggested ways forward to improve the framework and knowledge on norm acceptance in the future. In sum, the most important message that this thesis conveys is that explanations for norm emergence and norm acceptance should always take account of contingencies. In addition, practitioners wanting to promote a certain norm proposition would do well to focus on creating a “common language” regarding the proposition and being prepared to create productive windows out of unexpected contingencies.
Sammanfattning

Denna avhandling undersöker hur normer sprids i det internationella samfundet. Krav på nya normer och på hur det internationella samfundet borde agera i olika frågor genomsyrrar alla delar av internationell politik. Exempel på sådana normer är att förhindra konflikter, skydda barns rättigheter, säkerställa hållbar utveckling, säkerställa fria och rättvisa val samt att förbjuda landminer. Internationella normer berör alltså vad som anses vara rätt värderingar och når de har nått bred acceptans utgör de en måttstock för vad som är ett riktigt sätt att agera på i olika typer av frågor. På så sätt formar normer hur samhället fungerar. Denna avhandling intresserar sig för varför vissa krav eller förslag på nya normer blir accepterade i det internationella samfundet medan andra inte blir det. Avhandlingen undersöker detta med hjälp av två samtida normförslag inom klimatsäkerhetsområdet, vilka följs från 80-talet fram till år 2015.


flera tillfällen funnits förhoppningar att frågan ska få ett betydande genomslag inom FN:s flyktingorgan (UNHCR) eller FN:s klimatkonvention (UNFCCC). Detta har dock inte lyckats. Förslaget har av olika anledningar istället fortsatt att nedprioriteras, skjuts på framtiden och har inte nått bred acceptans inom det internationella samfundet.

Den här avhandlingen använder teorier om normdynamik för att förstå dessa två olika utfall och för att mer generellt förstå mekanismerna bakom normacceptans på internationell nivå. Avhandlingen menar att följande komponenter fattas i tidigare förklaringsmodeller för normers framväxt och framgång: 1) det initiala stadiet av normers framväxt är inte tillräckligt specificerat, 2) modeller av normers ”livscykler” framställer processen som alltför automatisk, 3) för lite uppmärksamhet ägnas åt motstånd i processen samt 4) tillräcklig uppmärksamhet och teoretisering har inte ägnats åt hur externa faktorer och mer eller mindre dramatiska tillfälligheter påverkar normers framväxt och acceptans. Denna avhandling utvecklar ett nytt analytiskt ramverk vilket bygger på de mest centrala faktorerna från traditionella förklaringsmodeller (aktörskap, normens egenskaper och framing), adderar två senare komponenter (arena och motstånd) samt inkluderar externa faktorer i form av tillfälligheter och så kallade ”möjlighetsfönster”. Teoretiseringen av de sistnämnda i förhållande till nya normer är den här avhandlingens viktigaste och mest centrale bidrag.

Fallstudierna utgör så kallade ”plausibility probes”, det vill säga fallstudier med hjälp av vilka det föreslagna analytiska ramverkets rimlighet och förklaringsvärde utvärderas. Analysen kan sedan ligga till grund för framtida testing av ramverkets antaganden. Samtidigt möjliggör det analytiska ramverket en systematisk och ingående analys av de empiriska fallen och erbjuder nya förklaringsdimensioner och infallsvinklar som inte tidigare lyfts fram. Materialalet för fallstudierna består av officiell dokumentation, rapporter, intervjuer med representanter för berörda organisationer och politiska institutioner samt vissa andrahandskällor. Sammantaget utgör detta ett rikt och till viss del unikt empiriskt material för dessa normförslag.

Analysen visar att externa tillfälligheter och möjlighetsfönster kan förbättra förståelsen för dessa fall på ett betydande sätt. Katastrofriskreducering utgör ett exempel på ett normförslag där en stor naturkatastrof sammanfaller med ett förberett internationellt möte och på så sätt gav en avgörande skjuts mot bred internationell acceptans av normen. Fallet med klimatmigration visar hur tre specifika tidpunkter under processen har haft särskilt hög potential att leda till acceptans för normförslaget. Dessa tillfällen har dock inte lett till någon betydande eller varaktig framgång eftersom det antingen inte funnits några konkreta politiska förslag att agera på, för att det inte har funnits något användbart möjlighetsfönster eller för att det fönster som funnits har varit ”negativt”.

Ett viktigt bidrag från analysen av fallen tillsammans med det analytiska ramverket visar på hur externa händelser aktivt måste kopplas till det specifika normförslaget i fråga för att skapa ett möjlighetsfönster och hur ett sådant
fönster måste sammanfalla med ramverkets övriga faktorer för att ha störst effekt på utfallet. Mot denna bakgrund är slutsatsen av denna studie att externa tillfälligheter och en teoretisering av möjlighetsfönster alltid bör tas i beaktande i förklaringsverktyg för normdynamik och normacceptans. Viktiga förklaringsfaktorer riskerar annars att missas.
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List of interviews

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Interview 1.2. 22 November 2013.
Interview 1.3. 29 October 2014.
Interview 1.4. 30 October 2014.
Interview 1.5. 29 October 2014.
Interview 1.6. 29 October 2014.
Interview 1.7. 16 February 2016.
Interview 1.8. 16 February 2016 and 10 October 2017.
Interview 1.9. 17 February 2016.
Interview 1.10. 17 February 2016.
Interview 1.11. 19 February 2016.
Interview 1.12. 4 November 2016.
Interview 1.13. 21 November 2013.
Interview 1.14. 30 October 2014.
Interview 1.15. 9 October 2017 and 13 October 2017.
Interview 1.16. 12 October 2017.
Interview 2.1. 2 February 2017.
Interview 2.2. 16 March 2017
Interview 2.3. 16 March 2017.
Interview 2.4. 20 March 2017.
Interview 2.5. 28 March 2017.
Interview 2.6. 2 October 2017.
Interview 2.7. 11 October 2017.
Interview 2.8. 11 October 2017.
Interview 2.9. 12 October 2017
Interview 2.10. 16 October 2017.
Interview 2.11. 23 October 2017.
Interview 2.12. 9 November 2017.
Interview 2.13. 14 December 2017.
Interview 2.15. 14 June 2018.
Appendix 1: overview of the material on disaster risk reduction

Interviews

15 in-depth individual interviews were conducted between 2 February 2017 and 14 June 2018 with representatives of the following organizations (in alphabetic order):

- Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), Geneva
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Geneva
- National Center for Crisis Management Research and Training (CRISMArt), Swedish Defence University, Stockholm
- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Stockholm
- Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), Karlstad and Stockholm
- United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), Brussels, Geneva and New York
- World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Geneva

The following, additional, organizations were represented as previous employers to some of the interviewees, these are mentioned here as the interviewees’ experience from there also proved valuable in their answers:

- Commission on Climate Change and Development (CCDC)
- Disaster Preparedness ECHO Programme (DIPECHO), European Commission
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
- The World Bank
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)
Documents

Conference Reports and proceedings:

UN Global Assessment Reports:

UNGA Resolutions
Other UN documents and reports:

- UNISDR 2009. *UNISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction*
- UNISDR 2010. *Advocacy kit for parliamentarians: disaster risk reduction*
- UNISDR 2010. *Briefing note 03: Strengthening Climate Change Adaptation through Effective Disaster Risk Reduction.*
- UN News Centre. 2009. *Interview with Margareta Wahlström, Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction.*
Appendix 2: overview of the material on climate-induced migration

Interviews
16 in-depth interviews with 17 individuals were conducted between 21 November 2013 and 13 October 2017 with representatives of the following organizations (in alphabetic order):

- Academics, Liège and Brussels
- CLIMA department of the European Commission, Brussels
- DEVCO department of the European Commission, Brussels
- Heinrich Boell Stiftung, Brussels
- HOME department of the European Commission, Brussels
- Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), Geneva
- International Organization for Migration (IOM), Brussels and Geneva
- Migration Policy Institute, Brussels
- Nansen Initiative, Geneva
- Norwegian Refugee Council, Geneva
- Platform for Disaster Displacement, Geneva
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Brussels and Geneva

The following, additional, organizations were represented as previous employers to some of the interviewees, these are mentioned here as the interviewees’ experience from there also proved valuable in their answers:

- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

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Other UN institutions

IOM
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IDMC and NRC

The Nansen Initiative

Other
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